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LAYS
of the True North
and other
CANADIAN POEMS

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LAYS OF THE 'TRUE NORTH.'

Agnes Maud, Macher



Lays of the 'True North,'

AND

OTHER CANADIAN POEMS.

BY

AGNES MAULE MACHAR,

AUTHOR OF

'STORIES OF NEW FRANCE,' 'MARJORIE'S CANADIAN WINTER,'
'ROLAND GRAEME, KNIGHT,' ETC.

SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION.

'And that true North, whereof we lately heard
A strain to shame us, "Keep ye to yourselves,
So loyal is too costly! friends,—your love
Is but a burden; loose the bond and go."
—Is this the tone of empire?'

TENNYSON : *Ode to the Queen.*

LONDON :
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
TORONTO: THE COPP, CLARK CO., LIMITED.

1902.

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1902

To

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY

Queen Victoria,

THESE PAGES ARE, BY KIND PERMISSION,
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

OUR SOVEREIGN LADY, whose fair woman's hand
Has held so firm and well for three-score years,
Through changing cloud and sunshine, smiles and tears,
The sceptre of our Britain's sea-girt land,
Extending far, as with a magic wand,
Order and peace, the freedom that endears
That ancient name which all the world reveres!
About thy throne two generations stand
And call thee blessèd, for each peaceful year
Thou, 'by God's grace,' hast kept thy sway serene.
More prized by thee than gems of lustre clear,
Or minute-guns, or pomp of martial sheen—
The love that binds to thee thy people dear,
And wakes the world-wide prayer—'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN !'

June, 1897.

PREFACE.

A NUMBER of these poems have appeared in periodicals and anthologies—some under the Author's own name ; some under the *nom de plume* of 'Fidelis,' well known in Canada. They are now collected for the first time, with the addition of others hitherto unpublished.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

As will be seen from the dedication, the first edition was published soon after the Diamond Jubilee of our late beloved Queen Victoria.

KINGSTON, CANADA.

A WELCOME FROM CANADA.

TO THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CORNWALL AND YORK.

For sake of her we loved so well and long,
Whose reign shall live in story and in song,
The heart and centre of our Empire's fame,
And the bright age that bears her honoured name,
And our great Empire, spread from sea to sea,
Heir of the ages, bulwark of the free ;
Oh, Prince, with heart and soul we welcome thee !

For sake of him in whom we love to trace
Her earnest purpose and her royal grace,
To whom a sorrowing people turned to sing
With loyal heart and voice, ' God save our King !'
As once in youthful prime o'er stormy sea
We welcomed *him*, so now we welcome *thee*,
Heir of his house and throne our King to be !

For sake of her who came, a fair young bride,
Leaving her home, and all she loved beside,
When ' Norman, Celt and Saxon ' thronged to greet
The conquering glamour of her presence sweet,
We greet her son, and by his side we see
Another Princess ; Saxon, Norman we,
And Celt, yet, Britons, welcome her and thee !

In the long future, when the changeful years
Have brought their added weight of cares and fears,
May these fair realms, seen in life's morning bright,
A vision live, in memory's tender light.
From ' Greater Britain,' spread from sea to sea,
' Neath the old red-cross banner of the free,
Ten thousand welcomes rise to her and thee !

KINGSTON, CANADA,
October, 1901.

CONTENTS.

I.—LAYS OF THE 'TRUE NORTH.'

	PAGE
THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CANADIAN POEM - - -	1
CANADA TO THE LAUREATE - - -	4
OUR CANADIAN FATHERLAND - - -	6
PRAYER FOR DOMINION DAY, 1890 - - -	8
THE NEW WORLD - - -	9
CANADA'S BIRTHDAY - - -	10
THE PASSING OF CLOTE-SCARP, OR GLOOSCAP - -	12
NÔTRE DAME DES ANGES - - -	15
A BIRTHDAY SONG - - -	17
THE THERMOPYLÆ OF NEW FRANCE - - -	20
THE PASSING OF PÈRE LA BROUSSE - - -	25
IN ACADIE - - -	30
LAURA SECORD - - -	32
QUEBEC TO ONTARIO - - -	36
CANADA OUR HOME - - -	37
A FRATERNAL GREETING FROM CANADA - - -	41
A SONG FOR CANADA - - -	42
DIRGE OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE - - -	44
OUR LADS TO THE FRONT - - -	46

II.—CANADIAN WOODNOTES.

IN THE FOREST - - -	48
SPRING BIRDS - - -	49
THE SOUTH-WEST WIND - - -	50
AN APRIL DAY - - -	52
THE LEGEND OF THE MAYFLOWER - - -	52
THE COMING OF THE SPRING - - -	54
WELCOME TO THE HEPATICA, OR LIVERWORT - -	56
MAY-DAYS - - -	57
THE HERALDS OF SPRING - - -	58
THE WHIP-POOR-WILL - - -	60

	PAGE
SPRING'S UNDERTONE - - - - -	61
DRIFTING AMONG THE THOUSAND ISLANDS - - - - -	62
A SUMMER SUNSET - - - - -	63
THE INDIAN PIPE - - - - -	64
AN AUGUST MORNING - - - - -	65
THE HAPPY ISLANDS - - - - -	66
TO A FRIEND IN EUROPE - - - - -	67
THE CREEK - - - - -	69
SEPTEMBER AMONG THE THOUSAND ISLANDS - - - - -	71
A DIRGE FOR THE DYING SUMMER - - - - -	72
AN INDIAN SUMMER CAROL - - - - -	74
OCTOBER GOLD - - - - -	75
ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER - - - - -	76
GOLDEN-ROD AND ASTERS - - - - -	77
NOVEMBER FANCIES - - - - -	78
PREMONITION - - - - -	81
IN 'MELANCHOLY DAYS' - - - - -	82

III.—ECHOES OF LIFE AND THOUGHT.

THE MYSTIC SINGER - - - - -	83
UNTRODDEN WAYS; OR, TWO VISIONS - - - - -	87
LOVE AND PRIDE - - - - -	88
SCHILLER'S DYING VISION - - - - -	89
THE ANGELS' VISIT - - - - -	91
IN A STUDIO - - - - -	93
THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY - - - - -	94
ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE - - - - -	95
REALITY - - - - -	96
THE BATTLE OF THE HUNS - - - - -	98
IN THE ELIZABETHAN GARDEN AT HEIDELBERG - - - - -	100
IN AFGHANISTAN - - - - -	101
THE PRINCE AND HIS BRIDE - - - - -	102
THE STORMING OF THE ICE PALACE - - - - -	103
GARFIELD'S FUNERAL DAY - - - - -	105
MOTHER AND DAUGHTER - - - - -	106
TO THE HEIGHTS - - - - -	107
A CHRISTMAS RIME - - - - -	108
'THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD' - - - - -	110
SALVE, JUVENIS! - - - - -	111
THE PILGRIMS IN THE DESERT - - - - -	112

	PAGE
WAITING YET - - - - -	114
A PRESAGE - - - - -	116
ARDENVOHR - - - - -	116
A MOONLIGHT VISION - - - - -	117
THE LOST PICTURE - - - - -	118
A MODERN DRYAD - - - - -	119
A MISUNDERSTANDING - - - - -	120
LEFT BEHIND - - - - -	124
THE ROYAL FUNERAL- - - - -	124
THE SILENT HOUR - - - - -	125
AN ADVENT HYMN - - - - -	126
BE PATIENT AND ENDURE - - - - -	128
THE STAR IN THE WEST - - - - -	129
L'ENVOI - - - - -	129
EASTER LILIES - - - - -	130
FOR THE TERCENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF JOHN KNOX - - - - -	131
THE GRAVE OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING - - - - -	133
ROBERT BROWNING DEAD - - - - -	136
TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER - - - - -	137
CHARLES KINGSLEY - - - - -	138
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER - - - - -	139
WHITTIER'S 'HOLY FLOWERS' - - - - -	141
OUR DEPARTED LAUREATE - - - - -	142
IMMANUEL - - - - -	143
A CHRISTMAS CAROL - - - - -	144
IN MEMORIAM - - - - -	147
IN VAIN - - - - -	149
'TENOS, THOU GOOD ONE: A TENDER FAREWELL' - - - - -	149
THE AFTER-GLOW - - - - -	151
BON VOYAGE !- - - - -	151
THE SOWER - - - - -	152
AT LAST - - - - -	153
A NEW YEAR'S WISH - - - - -	153
IN MEMORIAM- - - - -	154
'WHO SHALL ROLL AWAY THE STONE?' - - - - -	156
THE SPRING IN THE WILDERNESS - - - - -	157
'LORD, THAT I MAY RECEIVE MY SIGHT!' - - - - -	161
THE BETTER PART - - - - -	162
A BURNS ANNIVERSARY - - - - -	163
A NEW YEAR'S GREETING - - - - -	165

	PAGE
A FAREWELL - - - - -	167
VALE ET SALVE ! - - - - -	168
EHEU FUGACES - - - - -	170
LITTLE THINGS - - - - -	171
OUR DUMB BROTHERS - - - - -	172
THE FIRST BIRDS - - - - -	173
'DOE YE NEXT THINGE' - - - - -	173
THE PARTING YEAR - - - - -	174
THE PASSING OF THE CENTURY - - - - -	175
THE HUNDREDTH YEAR - - - - -	177

IV.—BALLADS OF LOVE AND LABOUR.

AFTER THE SILVER WEDDING - - - - -	178
THE MADONNA OF THE ENTRY - - - - -	180
JOE BIRSE, THE ENGINEER - - - - -	181
THE GOOD-BYE AT THE DOOR - - - - -	182
CHRISTMAS IN THE HOSPITAL - - - - -	183
THE NEW CRUSADE - - - - -	185
A THANKSGIVING HYMN - - - - -	186
THE WIDOW'S LAST HOME - - - - -	187

V.—SONNETS.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE	190
THE EMPEROR WILLIAM - - - - -	190
UNSER FRITZ - - - - -	191
CAPE ETERNITY - - - - -	191
ASSOCIATION - - - - -	192
THE HAREBELL AND THE CATARACT - - - - -	192
ROBERT BROWNING - - - - -	193
THE WHITE CITY - - - - -	194
PRESENT-DAY SONNETS - - - - -	195
THE CIRCLING YEAR - - - - -	197
BEYOND THE DARKNESS - - - - -	203
THE CALL OF THE CENTURY - - - - -	203
A FAREWELL GREETING TO LORD AND LADY ABERDEEN	
ON THEIR LEAVING CANADA - - - - -	204
THE MOTHER QUEEN- - - - -	204

VI.—THE WINGED VICTORY: A DRAMATIC POEM -	207
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I.

LAYS OF THE 'TRUE NORTH.'

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE CANADIAN POEM.

'In hoc signo vinces.'

FROM west to east, from east to west,
The glad bells ring across the sea ;
They echo o'er the ocean's breast
With sound of song and minstrelsy.
Wide as our world-wide Empire swells
The mellow music of the bells
That ring Victoria's Jubilee !

Back through the mists of sixty years
They bid the lingering fancy stray,
Through all their changing hopes and fears,
Through summers green and winters gray ;
And, looking both ways o'er the stream
Of Time, we see, as in a dream,
The vision of a gala-day :—

A chapel royal, through whose vaulted height
Deep organ tones majestic music pour,
While, through emblazoned panes, the rainbow light
Falls in soft colours on the marble floor,
On Britain's chivalry, on ladies bright,
And effigies of kings and knights of yore,
And a young princess, on whose sunny hair
A crown imperial rests—too stern a weight of care !

In the dim splendour of that ancient shrine
Again the maiden stands, but not alone ;
Love's snowy blossoms with her jewels twine ;
A dearer kingdom, a more fitting throne,
The crown of womanhood the most divine,
This fairer pageant gives her for her own ;
And onward now, in love's sweet strength serene,
Shall walk with firmer tread the woman and the queen !

So ran its course through many a peaceful year
The happy idyll of a royal love,
Rich with all blessings human hearts hold dear,
Nor set in lonely majesty above
All lowly lives, but, with its radiance clear,
Brooding o'er all the nation like a dove,
'Till fate came sudden, deaf to prayers and tears,
And cut in twain the current of the tranquil years.

The woman's heart clung, mourning, to the grave,
The queen must brace herself alone to bear
The burden of her station ; and how brave
The heart that bore so well its load of care
And bitter grief, He knows alone who gave
The balm to sorrow and the strength to prayer ;
Whose unseen guidance through the light and dark
Guides men and nations to th' appointed mark.

So must the stream of human progress flow
Through light and shadow to the brighter day,
Now seeming backward on its course to go,
While lingering evil smites us with dismay—
Wrong and oppression,—dumb beasts' helpless woe,
The burdens men upon their fellows lay ;—
While yet, through all the turnings, all the strife,
Still through our Empire flows a tide of fresh'ning life.

The dusky Hindoo, 'neath his sheltering palm
Ceases to muse on those dim, shadowy days
Of mystic contemplation, dreamlike calm
That brooded o'er the cradle of our race,

Loses, in music of the Christian psalm,
The jarring tones of conquest and disgrace,
Till he, too, catch the nobler impulse nigh,
And hope and progress kindle in his pensive eye.

In the far islands 'neath the Austral skies,
Where the dark low-browed savage chased his prey
But fifty years ago,—great cities rise,
And a new empire, at the gates of day,
Owns, as the moulder of its destinies
The sea-queen isle, of northern waters gray ;
While, where the sun burns hot on Afric's sands
New peoples wake to life, and stretch to it their hands.

Our fair Dominion spreads from sea to sea
Her pine-clad mountains, prairies, streams, and lakes ;
Where late the hardy Indian wandered free,
The throbbing life of a young nation wakes,
A greater Britain of the West to be,
While yet no link of happy concord breaks ;
With the dear land from whence our fathers brought
Heirlooms of high tradition, poesy, and thought.

And when another sixty years have sped,
May the old red-cross flag still float on high,
The sacred sign of evil phantoms fled,
Of broken power, of wrong and tyranny.
Where'er its free-born standard-bearers tread,
Ne'er may the weak for rescue vainly cry,
No voice of brother's blood for vengeance rise,
Nor smoke of ruined homes defile the clear blue skies !

First in the files of progress may it be ;
First in the march of science, freedom, peace,
Bearing the truth that must make all men free,
The Brotherhood of man, whose blest increase
Shall merge in it, as rivers in the sea,
All hearts in love, till every discord cease,
And every warring symbol shall be furled
Before the ensign of a federated world !

So let the bells ring o'er the sea
 From west to east, from east to west,
 Bearing the anthem of the free
 Across the ocean's azure breast,
 A world-wide song of love and liberty—
 'Victoria'! '*In this symbol*' bless the brighter age to be!

CANADA TO THE LAUREATE.

IN RESPONSE TO TENNYSON'S LINES.

'AND that true North, whereof we lately heard
 A strain to shame us,—“Keep you to yourselves;
 So loyal is too costly. Friends, your love
 Is but a burden; loose the bond and go.”
 Is this the tone of empire?’

We thank thee, Laureate, for thy kindly words
 Spoken for us to her to whom we look
 With loyal love across the misty sea—
 Thy noble words, whose generous ring may shame
 The cold and heartless tone that said, ‘Begone!
 We want your love no longer; all our aim
 Is riches. *That* your love cannot increase.’
 Fain would we tell them that we do not seek
 To hang dependent, like a helpless brood
 Who, selfish, drag a weary mother down;
 For we have British hearts and British blood
 That leap up eager when the danger calls!
 Once and again our sons have sprung to arms
 To fight in Britain's quarrel—not our own—
 And drive the covetous invader back,
 Who would have let us, peaceful, keep our own—
 So we had cast the British name away!
 Canadian blood has dyed Canadian soil
 For Britain's honour that we deemed our own;
 Nor do we ask but for the right to keep
 Unbroken, still, the cherished filial tie
 That binds us to the distant sea-girt isles

Our fathers loved, and taught their sons to love,
As the dear home of freemen, brave and true,
And loving honour more than ease or gold !

Well do we love our own Canadian land,
Its breezy lakes, its rivers sweeping wide
Past stately towns and peaceful villages,
And banks begirt with forests, to the sea ;
Its tranquil homesteads and its lonely woods,
Where sighs the summer breeze through pine and fern.

But well we love, too, Britain's daisied meads,
Her primrose-bordered lanes, her hedgerows sweet,
Her purple mountains and her heathery braes,
Her towers and ruins, ivy-crowned and gray,
Glistening with song and story as with dew ;
Dear to our childhood's dreaming fancy, since
We heard of them from those whose hearts were sore
For home and country left, and left for aye,
That they might found, in these our western wilds,
New Britains, not unworthy of the old !

We hope to live a history of our own,
One worthy of the lineage that we claim ;
Yet, as our past is but of yesterday,
We claim as ours, too, that emblazoned roll
Of golden deeds that bind with golden links
The long dim centuries since King Arthur ' passed.'
Fain would we thence new inspiration draw
To make our country's future still uphold
The high traditions of a noble past,
That crowned our Britain queen on her white cliffs,
Stretching her sceptre o'er the gleaming waves
Ever beyond the sunset ! There were some
Who helped to found our wide Canadian realm,
Who left their cherished homes, their earthly all,
In the fair borders that disowned her sway,
Rather than sever the dear filial tie
That stretched so strong through all the tossing waves,
And came to hew out, in the trackless wild
New homes, where still their ancient flag should wave.

We would be worthy them, and worthy thee,
 Our old ideal Britain ! generous, true,
 The helper of the helpless ;—and perchance,
 Seeing thyself in our revering eyes,
 Might keep thee worthier of thine ancient name
 And place among the nations ! Still we would
 Believe in thee, and strive to make our land
 A brighter gem to deck the royal crown
 Whose lustre is thy children's—*is our own !**

OUR CANADIAN FATHERLAND.

(*For the air 'Was ist der Deutschen Vaterland?'*)

'Canadensis sum, et nihil Canadensis a me alienum puto.'

I.

WHAT is our young Canadian land ?
 Is it fair Norembega's strand ?
 Or gray Cape Breton by the sea ?
 Quebec ? Ontario ? Acadie ?
 Or Manitoba's flower-decked plain ?
 Or fair Columbia's mountain chain ?
 Can any part, from strand to strand,
 Be a Canadian's Fatherland ?
 Nay ! for our young Canadian land
 Is greater, grander far than these ;
 It stretches wide on either hand
 Between the world's two mighty seas.
 So let no hostile foot divide
 The fields our feet should freely roam ;
 Gael, Norman, Saxon, side by side,
 And Canada our nation's home ;
 From sea to sea, from strand to strand,
 Spreads our Canadian Fatherland !

* The above lines, originally published in *Good Words*, were generously acknowledged by the late Laureate in a cordial note to the author.

II.

Where'er our country's banner spreads
Its folds o'er free Canadian heads,—
Where'er our land's romantic story
Enshrines the memory and the glory
Of heroes who, with blood and toil,
Laid deep in our Canadian soil
Foundations for the future age,
And wrote their names on history's page—
Our history,—from strand to strand,
Spreads our Canadian Fatherland !
So each to each is firmly bound
By ties all generous hearts should own ;
We cannot spare an inch of ground :
No severed part can stand alone.
So Nova Scotia and Quebec
Shall meet in kinship real and true ;—
New Brunswick's hills be mirrored back
In fair Ontario's waters blue.
From sea to sea, from strand to strand,
Spreads our Canadian Fatherland !

III.

Where'er Canadian thought breathes free,
Or strikes the lyre of poesy,—
Where'er Canadian hearts awake
To sing a song for her dear sake,
Or catch the echoes, spreading far,
That wake us to the noblest war
Against each lurking ill and strife
That weaken now our growing life,
No line keep hand from clasping hand—
One is our young Canadian land.
McGee and Howe she counts her own ;
Hers all her eastern singers' bays ;
Fr  chette is hers, and in her crown
Ontario every laurel lays ;
Let CANADA our watchword be,
While lesser names we know no more ;

*One nation, spread from sea to sea,
And fused by love from shore to shore ;
From sea to sea, from strand to strand,
Spreads our Canadian Fatherland !*

PRAYER FOR DOMINION DAY, 1890.

WITH head uplifted towards the Polar star,
And feet half buried in the vines and corn,
Our country, of the nations latest born,
Stretches one hand the Atlantic waves to bar,
The other—to the setting sun afar—
Rolls back the wide Pacific towards the morn !
And yet, methinks, distracted and forlorn
She looks—from things that were to things that are—
With doubtful eyes, that all uncertain sweep
The wide horizon, as if searching there
For one strong love to make her pulses leap
With one strong impulse ! Wayward passions tear
The heart that should be set in purpose deep,
And cloud the eyes that should be raised in prayer !

O God of nations, who hast set her place
Between the rising and the setting day,
Her part in this world's changeful course to play,
Soothe the conflicting passions that we trace
In her unrestful eyes—grant her the grace
To know the one true perfect love that may
Give noble impulse to her onward way—
God's love, that doth all other loves embrace !
Gird her with panoply of truth and right
In which she may go forth her fate to meet,—
Ithuriel's spear, to crush with angel might
The brood of darkness crouching at her feet ;
With faith to nerve her will and clear her sight,
Till she shall round a destiny complete !

THE NEW WORLD.

ONE hemisphere lay hid in misty night ;

God said, ' Let there be light !'

And straight a bark from Palos steered its way

O'er trackless ocean towards the setting day ;—

And he who shaped its course with outlook grave

Had thought and prayed through many a sleepless night

In convent cell, or on the restless wave.

Beyond the watery waste, his prophet sight

Had traced, in vision, shadowy purple bands,

Had seen in dreams the rich and fruitful lands

Towards which o'erflowing human tides might sweep,

Bearing the teeming life from older strands,

That yet must lay foundations firm and deep

For nations born of nations in their sleep,

Waking to find their children's sturdy hands

Able and strong their hard-won prize to keep !

The red men, standing by in feathered pride,

Gazed wondering—open-eyed—

To see, upon their strand remote and lone,

These pale-faced strangers from a world unknown.

Little *they* dreamed, who paddled close to shore,

Afraid to fare forth on the trackless sea,—

Little they dreamed of what those white wings bore

For them, what omens dark of misery ;

Little they knew of what the coming years

Must bring to them of strife and blood and tears—

The ancient empire of their fathers spurned ;

Fled the wild subjects of their bows and spears ;

Their hunting-grounds to yellow cornfields turned ;

Their lodges levelled and their forests burned !

Ship after ship, band after band appears,

To keep the sway these first explorers earned.

Perchance their Sachems, on the evening gale,

Caught a low, sobbing wail,

As if their fathers' spirits sighed, in vain,

O'er all the desolation, death and pain

Which these strange, winged barks from unknown seas
 Bore with their pale-faced crews, an unseen freight ;—
 Men seeming friends, and eager now to please,
 Yet but the van of legions driven by fate !
 So must the tide of human progress go
 Past every barrier, till it overflow
 All wastes where the dull savage lived and died
 Amid the common round of instincts low,—
 The chase, the strife, the skill of spear and bow,—
 Till quickened life o'erspread those regions wide
 With higher impulse in its swelling tide,
 And nobler men to nobler stature grow
 In a new world which God hath purified !

CANADA'S BIRTHDAY.

WITH *feu de joie*, and merry bells, and cannons' thunder-
 ing peal,
 And pennons fluttering on the breeze, and serried rows
 of steel,
 We greet once more the birthday morn of our Canadian
 land,
 Wide stretching from Atlantic shore to far Pacific strand,
 With sweeping rivers, ocean lakes, and prairies wide and
 free,
 And waterfalls and forests dim, and mountains by the sea ;
 A country on whose birth there smiled the genius of
 romance,
 Above whose cradle brave hands hung the lilied flag of
 France ;—
 Whose infancy was grimly nursed in peril, pain and woe,
 When gallant hearts found early graves beneath Canadian
 snow ;
 When savage raid and ambuscade and famine's sore distress
 Combined their strength in vain to crush the gallant
 French noblesse ;
 While her dim, trackless forests lured again and yet again
 From silken courts of sunny France her flower, the
 brave Champlain ;

And now her proud traditions guard four ancient rolls
of fame,
Crécy's and Flodden's combatants for ancestors we claim !
Past feud and battle buried far behind the peaceful years,
While Gaul and Celt and Saxon turn to pruning-hooks
their spears ;
Four nations welded into one with long, historic past,
Have found in these our western wilds one common life
at last !

Through the young giant's mighty limbs that reach from
sea to sea

There runs a throb of conscious life, of waking energy ;
From Nova Scotia's misty coast to far Pacific shore
She wakes, a band of scattered homes and colonies no more,
But a young nation, with her life full beating in her breast ;
A noble future in her eyes, the Britain of the West.
Hers be the generous task to fill the yet untrodden plains
With fruitful, many-sided life that courses through her
veins :

The English honour, nerve and pluck, the Scotchman's
faith in right,

The grace and courtesy of France, the Irish fancy bright,
The Saxon's faithful love of home and home's affections
blest,

And chief of all, our holy faith, of all her treasures best !

May she, though poor in luxuries, wax rich in noble deeds,
Knowing that righteousness exalts the people that it leads.
As yet the waxen mould is soft, the opening page is fair ;
It rests with those who rule us now to leave their im-
press there,—

The stamp of true nobility, high honour, stainless truth,
The earnest quest of noble ends, the generous heart of
youth ;

The love of country, soaring far above all party strife,
The love of culture, art and song, the crowning grace of life,
The love of science reaching far through Nature's
hidden ways,

The love and fear of Nature's God, a nation's highest praise ;

So, in the long hereafter, our Canada shall be
 The worthy heir of British power and British liberty,
 Spreading their blessings 'neath her sway to her remotest
 bounds,
 While with the fame of her fair name a continent resounds,
 True to the high traditions of our Britain's ancient glory
 Of patriots, prophets, martyrs, saints, who live in death-
 less story,—
 Strong in their liberty and truth, to shed from shore to
 shore
 A light among the nations, till nations are no more !

THE PASSING OF CLOTE-SCARP,* (OR
 GLOOSCAP).

HARK ! through the twilight stillness,
 Across the sleeping lake,
 What notes of mournful cadence
 The charmed stillness break !

Is it a wailing spirit
 That lingers on its flight,
 Or voice of human sorrow
 That echoes through the night ?

Nay, not from man or spirit
 Does that weird music flow ;
 'Tis the bird that waits for Clote-scarp,
 As the ages come and go.

* * * * *

Still in the Mic-mac lodges
 Is the old story told
 How Clote-scarp's passed, and ended
 Acadia's age of gold ;

* Clote-scarp or Glooscap is the Mic-mac Hiawatha, with something of the Western Balder and Hiawatha combined.

In the primeval forests,
In the old happy days,
The men and beasts lived peaceful
Among the woodland ways ;—

The forest knew no spoiler ;
No timid beast or bird
Feared fang or spear or arrow ;
No cry of pain was heard ;

For all loved gentle Clote-scarp,
And Clote-scarp loved them all,
And men and beasts and fishes
Obeyed his welcome call.

The birds came circling round him
With carols gay and sweet ;
The little wilding blossoms
Sprang smiling at his feet.

All spake one simple language,
And Clote-scarp understood,
And, in his tones of music,
Taught them that love was good !

But in the course of ages
An alien spirit woke,
And men and woodland creatures
Their peaceful compact broke.

Then, through the gloomy forest
The hunter tracked his prey ;
The bear and wolf went roaming
To ravage and to slay ;

Through the long reeds and grasses
Stole out the slimy snake ;
The hawk pounced on the nestling,
Close cowering in the brake ;

The beaver built his stronghold
Beneath the river's flow ;
The partridge sought the covert
Where beeches closest grow.

In mute and trembling terror
Each timid creature fled,
To seek the safest refuge,
And hide its hunted head !

In sorrow and in anger
Then gentle Clote-scarp spake :
' My soul can bear no longer
The havoc that ye make !

' Ye will not heed my bidding ;
I cannot stay your strife,
And so I needs must leave you
Till love renew your life.'

* * * *

Then by the great wide water
He made a parting feast ;
The men refused his bidding,
But there came bird and beast.

There came the bear and walrus,
The wolf with bristling crest ;
There came the busy beaver,
The deer with bounding breast ;

There came the mink and otter,
The seal with wistful eyes ;
The birds in countless numbers,
With sad, imploring cries !

But, when the feast was over,
He launched his bark canoe ;
The wistful creatures watched him
Swift gliding from their view.

They heard his far-off singing
Through the fast-falling night,
Till on the dim horizon
He vanished from their sight !

And then a wail of sorrow
Went up from one and all,
Then echoed through the twilight
The loon's long mournful call.

But all in vain their wailing,
In vain that wistful cry,
Alone, through deepening shadows,
The echoes made reply !

* * * *

Still, through the twilight, echoes
That cadence wild and shrill,
But on a blessed island
Clote-scarp is waiting still.

No darkness, cold or tempest
Comes near that happy spot ;
It fears no touch of winter,
For winter's self is not.

And there waits gentle Clote-scarp
Till happier days shall fall,
Till strife be fled for ever,
And love be Lord of all !

NÔTRE DAME DES ANGES.*

SOFTLY falls the July evening, in its fading fair and sweet,
'Neath dark pine-boughs flows the river, rippling gently
at our feet ;

Wooded shore and island, mirrored softly in its quiet
breast,

Lie enfolded in the stillness of the evening's peace and
rest ;

And the quiet of the Sabbath seems to brood o'er rock
and tree,

On the woodland and the river, far as straining eye can
see ;

And the birds' commingled vespers in a liquid carol swell,
While we catch the silvery chiming of the distant Sabbath
bell.

* Nôtre Dame des Anges was the name of the first rude dwelling of the pioneer missionaries of New France, or French Canada, both Recollets and Jesuits.

Yet from the scene around us, fair as such a scene
can be,
Still our thoughts go wandering eastward, with the river
towards the sea,
To the old great city, sitting throned in stern and rugged
state,
Guardian of our fair Dominion at its rocky entrance-gate!
Scarred by many a wintry tempest, still she keeps her
fortress-hold,
With her mountains curving round her, like Jerusalem of
old ;
While old memories of warfare, hard-won siege and gallant
fight,
Hover o'er the old gray ramparts, like the rays of sunset
light !
Yet not first to martial triumphs won upon the hard-
fought field,—
Not to knightly deeds of valour done where knightly
foemen yield,
Turn our thoughts with truest homage, when, from Time's
relentless wreck
We would save thy noblest treasures,—our old chivalrous
Quebec !
Light undying shines upon thee—light that Time can
ne'er efface,
Glory of the Christian heroes, shedding love's most tender
grace
O'er the old colonial fortress, keeping hard-won footing
here
Through the shocks of savage warfare and the wintry
tempest drear !
On from high embrasured rampart, on from bastioned
citadel,
Still the eye will travel farther, on one sacred spot to dwell,
Where, in curves of silver, winding, bright St. Charles
tenderly
Lingers 'mid the long green meadows where he loves the
best to stray !

There the rude stockaded cabins, there the grass-thatched
 roofs arose,
Of 'Our Lady of the Angels,'—home of men who bravely
 chose
Suffering in their Master's service,—hunger, cold, and
 warfare dread;
And, unmoved by stake and torture, still would follow
 where He led!

Huts and palisades have vanished; her gray ruins mark
 the spot:
Moss-grown mound and graven pillar saint and martyr
 needest not.
Lallement—Brébœuf—shine for ever on our history's
 earliest page,
And their martyr-fires shall light it long through many a
 future age!

Ours their faith and inspiration,—though with differing
 tongues we pray,
Still their spirit we would cherish in our country's life
 to-day;
Death of truer heroes never hallowed our Canadian sod
Than the men who, like their Master, died for love of
 man and God!

A BIRTHDAY SONG.

METHOUGHT in visions of the night
 I saw, as in a dream Elysian,
Our fair Dominion spread in sight,
 As from a prophet's mount of vision.
From east to west 'twas fair and free,
 Across the continent extended,
And mighty stream and inland sea
 Shone in the sun—a vision splendid!

Full oft the strong young eagle might,
Exhausted, furl his weary pinion,
Who strove to measure in his flight
The circuit of our wide Dominion !
From far snow-girdled Hudson's Bay,
O'er many a winding creek and river,
To where, beneath her shadowy spray,
Niagara thunders on for ever ;—

From where the long, low banks advance
Their barriers to the wide Atlantic,
O'er which the snowy surges prance
Like foaming steeds of war gigantic,—
To where the mild Pacific breaks
Mid frowning fiord and misty mountain,
Within whose caverned cañon wakes
In darkness, many a river fountain ;

Where lies Columbia's coast, rock-bound,
With rugged isle and mountain hoary,
Seamed with dark pass and *cache* profound,
Haunted with dreams of golden glory ;
Then eastward o'er a tract serene,
Pine-dotted steppe and rolling prairie,
Where rivers wind 'mid copses green,
And lakes are gemmed with isles of faëry ;

On where in state Superior sleeps
Beneath her purple-tinted highlands,
On where our proud St. Lawrence sweeps
Amid her maze of bosky islands,
By many a homestead nestling down
Mid orchard trees and dimpled meadow,
Where, 'neath the linden's leafy crown,
The kine are lying, deep in shadow ;

By many an inland pine-girt lake,
And glassy creek, in silence faring,
Mid sunny mead and woodland brake,
Its crown of water-lilies wearing ;

Then onward past Mount Royal's domes,
By many a gleaming guardian steeple,
Past narrow fields and bowery homes
Of quiet French Canadian people ;—

Till high upon its rocky throne
St. Louis' Castle—warder hoary—
Keeps guard above the quaint old town,
All haloed with Canadian story ;
Still on, where Orleans' woodlands sleep,
And swelling sails are seaward flashing,
Where Montmorency from the steep
Her snowy, foam-flecked sheet is dashing,—

And onward still, in mighty tide,
The Gulf, its way to ocean taking
'Twixt pine-crowned hills in circuit wide,
On gray Acadia's shore is breaking,
Where fishers roam, a hardy race,
The spoils of ocean homeward bringing,
And sea-pinks o'er the rock's dark face
Twine with dank sea-weed, moistly clinging !

Fair heritage and fruitful soil,
This land, our own, we fondly cherish,
Won for us by the blood and toil
Of those whose memory ne'er should perish ;
A land where Nature's forces teach
A lesson stern of bravely bearing
Whate'er betide, and youth can reach
A prime of high and noble daring—

A land where Nature's beauty, too,
A higher beauty still revealing,
In sunset glory, autumn hue,
May cherish high poetic feeling.
A land,—we fain would hope,—where Right
Shall rule o'er interest's baser measure,
And Christian love and Freedom's might
Together prove its dearest treasure !

Long, long may Britain's banner be
 Above our country's youth extended,
 The honoured ensign of the free,
 By brave Canadian hearts defended.
 But life is short, and thought is long,
 And Fancy, wearied, furl'd her pinion,
 And sought to frame a birthday song
 In honour of our young Dominion !

THE THERMOPYLÆ OF NEW FRANCE.

· INSCRIBED TO THE CANADIAN NATIONAL LEAGUE.

METHOUGHT I stood where Time had rolled his gathering
 mists away,
 And the long story of the past in open vision lay,
 Then from Mount Royal's wooded crest, an old gray cross
 beside,
 I heard a strangely mingled chant of grief and joy and
 pride :—
 'Now listen, gallant sons of France, beside the wide blue sea ;
 Now listen to the glorious tale that rings from Ville-Marie—
 Fair Ville-Marie, the sacred spot where, 'neath Mount
 Royal's crown,
 Brave hearts, true knights, keep watch and ward for France
 and her renown
 Against the craft, the stealthy shaft, the deadly ambushade
 Of the red panthers from the woods, in battle and in raid,
 Eager for torture, blood and death, their fiendish hearts
 delight,
 More cruel than the wolf that steals upon the flock at night !
 Our hearts within us quailed with fear, for,—so the rumour
 ran,—
 The dusky hordes were gathering round, to crush us to
 a man,
 From east and west, from north and south, each silent,
 swift canoe
 Came gliding on ;—the paddlers' eyes no ruth nor mercy
 knew.

‘Death to the hated pale-face!’—the watchward of each band ;

‘Torture and massacre and burn, and drive him from the land!’

Then spake aloud the young Daulac, the bravest of us all :

‘One hope remains for Ville-Marie, but some must fight and fall.

On the dark Ottawa’s green shore, where white the Rapids glance,

A score of faithful Frenchmen might die, and save New France !

I’ll lead the forlorn hope myself—man cannot better die Than for his country and his home!’ And sixteen made reply,—

Sixteen young men, our flower and pride—revere them, one and all—

‘Lead on, and we will follow, and fight until we fall!’

And though brave men — Le Moyne himself — hard pleaded for delay,

Till fields were sown, and more could go ; they stoutly answered, ‘Nay!’

The need was stern and urgent, delay might wreck the whole,

So eager for the deadly fray was each young patriot soul !

Before God’s holy altar, with prayer and chanted psalm,

As Christian knights, they pledged their vows in our old Nôtre Dame,

That oft had echoed back our prayers in trials sharp and sore,

But sure had never witnessed such a sight as that before !

And then, ’mid murmured blessings, they paddled from the beach ;

They sang a psalm, *we* bowed our heads, with hearts too full for speech !

Soon came our Huron ally, then, with forty following braves,

And swiftly flew each light canoe across the dancing waves ;

For when they heard that Daulac’s band had gone to meet the foe,

Their Indian pulses fiercely stirred, and on *they*, too,
would go,
Though our brave, prudent Maisonneuve, whose trust in
them was small,
Scarcely rejoiced to see them go, and feared what might
befall !

For weary weeks we heard no more, though day by day
we prayed,
As maidens pray for lovers, strong men sought heavenly
aid,
For the seventeen who faced such odds, in stress so
strange and sore,
While day by day the warm spring sun smiled down on
stream and shore,
And decked the woods with snowy bloom that mocked
our anxious glance,
As we thought of our young heroes, fighting,—dying for
New France !

At last, when weeks to months had grown, and summer's
burning glow
Yellowed the grain, and hope was dead, and fear was
merged in woe,
Some straggling Hurons found their way to waiting Ville-
Marie,
And told the tale that seemed defeat, and yet was victory !
We seemed to see the Iroquois come leaping down the
flood,
The musket-flash—the sudden dash—the eager rush for
blood,
The swift attack—the brave defence—the sharp repulse
and flight,
The weary days of waiting—then the last deadly fight !
We heard the fierce exultant yells, while, faithful unto death,
Each brave young hero held his ground, and fought with
failing breath !

What though Daulac fell, overborne, beside his dying
band,

The precious blood that dyed the sod had saved the
suffering land.

And not in vain our heroes fell, since with their death
they made

Against that savage torrent an unseen barricade ;

For if seventeen could thus defy seven hundred in their
lair,

What might a hundred Frenchmen here be roused to
do and dare ?

So with the solemn requiem blends the glad *Te Deum*
sung.

New France is saved ! and blessings fall from every
grateful tongue,

And while our hearts our heroes mourn, they throb with
patriot pride ;

New France must be the nobler now, since these have
lived and died !

* * * * *

Thus in a dream I seem to hear those voices of the dead,
While a new Canada hath risen through toil of centuries
fled ;

Gone are the dusky savage hordes that threatened then
its life,—

Ended the long sharp contest of fratricidal strife ;

And though St. George's Cross waves now for that of
St. Denis,

And the green maple leaf is twined with the white *fleur-*
de-lis—

We are the heirs of those brave hearts that erst both
standards bore,

And brought the light of faith and hope to a rude savage
shore ;

Each noble memory is ours to keep undimmed and
bright,

Each gallant deed to emulate in a yet nobler fight !

A fairer Canada is ours than that young Daulac knew,

And wider realms are ours to hold than Champlain
wandered through ;

'Tis ours to wage a nobler war than that of fire and steel;—
Subtler the foes that threaten now our country's peace
and weal :

Not fierce low passions only, in hearts half savage still,
Not ignorance and vice alone, with teeming brood of ill,
But 'idols of the market-place,' less hideous to behold,
The quenchless thirst for place and power, the sordid
greed of gold—

The hydra of corruption, that stretches, coil on coil,
Round the young manhood of our land, to strangle and
despoil

The freedom won on many a field and sung to many a
lyre,

That selfish men, for selfish ends, would trample in the
mire !—

The demon of dissension, of differing race and aims,
The shock of jarring interests, the clash of warring names,
The heartless, cold oppression that crushes down the weak,
The low half-muttered discontent that yet may loudly
speak,

The love of pleasure, choking thought and all heroic life,
The bitter hate that maddens men to internecine strife ;

The hostile ranks of party that scatter and divide

The ranks of our young warriors, whose place is side by
side !

These be the powers of darkness we have to face and
fight

In strength of knightly truth and faith, the armour of the
right ;

What though they swoop on wings of night to take the
citadel,

True knights once more may turn the tide and check the
hordes of hell !

With hearts on fire with patriot flame, encased in
silver mail,

And pure as were the knights of old who sought the Holy
Grail,

Bearing the Cross of Faith and Love upon each loyal
breast,

Token of lower life resigned—of higher life possessed !
So, conquering and to conquer, our heroes onward go,
Clad in immortal panoply, to fear no mortal foe ;
What though the single warrior fall in sorrow and defeat,
Still goes the great cause grandly on to victory complete,
And they who nobly do their part, and perish by the way,
Shall share the laurels, and divide the honours of the day !
So may the spirit of the brave seventeen of Ville-Marie
Inspire Canadian hearts to win a new Thermopylæ !

THE PASSING OF PÈRE LA BROSSE.

A LEGEND OF THE SAGUENAY.

COMMENT, M'sieu ? A story from old Pierre ?
'Tis a good time to tell it as we sit
Here round the camp fire ! August nights are cool
In these north regions. Summer goes so soon !
Yet the keen air enlivens like good wine
We taste so seldom now ! But M'sieu's tale
Must be a story of the good old times—
The times when hunts were hunts, and life was life !—
And that with right goodwill. No stories now
Grow, worth the telling ! So my tale shall be
Of the old, old time, one of my grandsire's tales.
Oft have I heard him tell it when, a boy,
I sat before his camp fire—nights like this,
And—boy-like—poked the embers with a stick,
And heaped on pine-cones, to send high the flame,
Chasing the shadows,—where I conjured up
The dark befeathered shapes of Indian braves
Lurking in wait to kill,—as, in the tales
The old man told, they kept their ambush dread !
But *this* one always I loved best to hear,
For then I thought no more of ambuscades,
And bloody scalps, and tomahawks, and spears,
But, when 'twas done, would peaceful fall asleep
As with God's benediction on my head !

Bien ! 'Tis a simple story of the times
When the woods teemed with game, and trappers throve,
And Indians lived with white men here at peace,
Because the long-robed Fathers toiled to show
The white man loved the red—at least *they* did,
For they loved all, and they served all alike !
Wherever there was trouble, there came they ;
If Jean had broken bones, or François feared
The approach of death, because of evil deeds
That, unconfessed, lay heavy on his soul,—
There stood the Fathers with their pitying eyes
And earnest warnings, ready to confess,
Exhort, absolve, or soothe the mourner's grief
And do last office for the passing soul !
White men or red,—'twas all the same to them,
And both seemed pagans near those holy men ;
For strange, indeed, to the rude trappers seemed
The manner of *their* lives, who might have shone
At court, or dwelt in peaceful, cloistered cell
In our fair France, near all they loved and prized,
If some strange impulse, hard to comprehend,
Had not constrained them, in these savage wilds,
To 'seek the lost sheep in the wilderness,'
For love of God and pity for their brother,
As our good Curé oft explained to me !

You know the old gray church at Tadousac,
Where frown the grim, fir-tufted crags above
The entrance to the gloomy Saguenay ?
By many a winter it hath battered been
Until it seems as hoary as the hills
That yet were old when first its beams were felled.
There many a tonsured Sieur has chanted mass
Since the first Father marked, with anguish keen,
The cruel passions of the savage heart ;
But of them all none was there more beloved,
More good, more loving than the Père la Brosse !
The children loved him for the friendly words
And kindly smiles that won their wild young hearts,
And little gifts that, from his scanty store,

He oft bestowed with blessing and caress,
For diligence in learning Pater-nosters
And creeds he set them in the Indian tongue ;
And, best of all, he loved to hear them sing
With clear young voices holy chant and hymn !

The squaws sat at his feet with rev'rent love,
For his strange gentleness of look and tone,
And for the hope and comfort that he spoke
To those who had so little in their lives,
That scarce at first they understood his ruth,
Until it stole about their beings' roots,
Softening the roughness left by rude hard lives,
Dropping like balm upon their dry, parched hearts,
Which scarcely they had known for hearts before !

And the fierce braves, who scarce had thoughts beyond
The fortunes of the chase, from day to day,
Or feast prepared to gorge themselves withal,
Till nought was left and Want was lord once more,
Even *they* would listen to his earnest talk
With heads bent forward, and keen eyes intent
On the strange things he told in his own way ;—
How the Great Spirit, in His mighty love,
Pitying their souls, and seeking them to save,
Had sent down His own Son to yield His life,
That they might live for ever,—happier far
Than aught that now their fondest dreams could feign ;
Only they must obey with grateful love
The Lord of love, who gave Himself for them.
And, as they listened, something drew their hearts
Towards Love unseen ; and waking conscience bore
Its witness to his words, as one by one
They came to be baptized ; and gentler ways
Insensibly grew up, as do the flowers
'Mid the wild rocks, beneath the breath of spring !
One evening, when the bitter winds of March
Had softened into balmy April gales,
And the shrill blue-bird glanced through budding trees
Where woke the thrushes' plaintive flute once more ;
And softer shone the sun from clear blue skies

On grass left green by swiftly-melting snow ;—
One such spring evening, round the big hearth fire
Of the rough-raftered room at Tadousac,
In the old trading post, there sat, as oft,
Trappers and traders, dusky Indian chiefs,
With officers of France—a motley crew.
With them, that eventide, sat Père la Brosse,
And talked in kindly converse of the things
That made the warp and woof of living there :—
The welcome signs of spring, th' expected ships
With stores and letters, news of friends and France,
The stock of peltries ready to be shipped—
With some old memories that seemed to come
Unbidden to his thoughts and to his lips,
Old tales of France and of his boyhood's days,
And scenes and friends of youth left far behind,
To which his heart paid tribute of a sigh.

But as the hour grew late, the Father rose,
And bidding all farewell with solemn look,
He further said some words that chilled their blood,
And seemed to stop the beating of their hearts
In sheer astonishment and dumb dismay.
Into the church he said he now must go
To watch and pray—and none must there intrude
Till, at the midnight hour, the passing bell
Should warn them that his soul had passed away ;
Then they should seek the chapel, there to find
The mortal part of him who spoke to them,
And there they reverently should let it lie,
Nor touch the loved and venerable form,
But swiftly two must go to Ile aux Coudres,
To bring from thence another holy man,
Père Compain—well they knew him for a saint,—
And yet not such a saint as Père la Brosse !—
And bring him back with them, that he might do
For him the last sad office. So he went,
And not the boldest dared to follow him
To the weird vigil he alone must keep.

So sat they there, and not a word was said,

As one by one the long, slow minutes passed,
Only their heart-throbs seemed to measure time,
Till suddenly on the strange stillness broke
The solemn tolling of the passing bell,
And then they knew his presage was fulfilled,
And he had passed to everlasting bliss !
With steps reluctant, dreading what they sought,
The silent company the chapel gained,
And there, before the altar, calm and still,
With peaceful smile upon the marble face,
And all the majesty of death impressed
Upon his tranquil brow, lay Père la Brosse !

Deep was the sorrow, heavy were the hearts
That waited for the earliest streak of dawn,
Wherewith a furious April gale arose,
That tossed the inky waves high on the shore.
But some stout hearts that nothing could dismay,
Intent to do the Father's last behest,
Launched their canoe upon the turbid stream,
And swiftly passed the Saguenay's grim gate
Into the great wide river surging high ;
And straight before them all the threatening waves
Calmed down to bear it on its onward way,
Till, in far shorter time than they had dared
To hope, they beached their bark at Ile aux Coudres ;
And there upon the rocks, awaiting them,
His brier in his hand, sat Père Compain,
For in the hush of midnight he had heard
His chapel bell toll for a passing soul,
And then a still small voice bade him prepare
To pay the last rites to good Père la Brosse.

Swiftly as they had come, they hastened back
O'er a calm river, 'neath an April sky,
With a fair wind that softly breathed of spring ;
Reaching again the pier of Tadousac
So soon that those who waited scarce could deem
That *they* had traversed all the weary leagues
Between gray Tadousac and Ile aux Coudres !

With mournful hearts they buried Père la Brosse
 Beside the chapel he had loved so well,
 Still standing silent warder of his rest ;
 And it was said by those who ought to know
 That in each mission Père la Brosse had served,
 The midnight tolling of its chapel bell
 Had marked the moment he had passed to heaven !

There you've Pierre's story,—all of it I know !—
 I give it as I heard it from my grandsire,
 Who faithfully believed it, every word,
 And said, moreover, that for many a year
 No trapper paddling down his load of furs,
 Or Indian gliding by in birch canoe,
 Could pass the rocky heights of Tadousac
 Without the holy sign, and benison
 On him whom all men loved, good Père la Brosse !

IN ACADIE.*

BROTHER ANTOINE'S SOLILOQUY.

FAIR through the valley winds the stream,
 To find at last the wide blue sea,
 And on its banks, in many a dream,
 I roam once more in Acadie.
 O Acadie ! dear Acadie !
 Fair are thy fields, mine Acadie !
 And there again I fain would be
 Where fields are green in Acadie !

In Acadie, when life was young
 I dreamed the restless dreams of youth ;
 I dreamed the world with gems was strung,
 And I must win my share, in sooth !

* Acadie is the old French name for Nova Scotia, and, in a general and poetical sense, for the hill-girt and sea-girt provinces of both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Now, Acadie, dear Acadie !

My weary heart returns to thee,
And fain my longing eyes would see
The sunny fields of Acadie !

The sunset through my convent bars
Paints golden memories on the wall ;
And as I watch the silver stars
I roam in fancy mid them all,—
Thy fields and woods, dear Acadie !—
My hungry heart cries out for thee ;
And ne'er by me forgot shall be
Thy fair green fields,—mine Acadie !

I see our seat beside the stream,—
The stream that seeks the wide blue sea ;
I see her dark eyes softly gleam,
My true love's eyes—in Acadie.
O Acadie ! dear Acadie !
Fair blooms the spring in Acadie ;
And there again I fain would be
Where fields are fair in Acadie !

The orchard boughs about the eaves
Bend as they bent so long ago ;
The reapers garner in the sheaves,
All golden in the sunset glow.
O Acadie ! dear Acadie !
Thine autumn woods once more I see ;
And fair in memory shine to me
The golden fields of Acadie !

Along those quiet fields, at eve,
The old folks walk and talk of me,
And wonder oft how I could leave
The fair green hills of Acadie.
O Acadie ! dear Acadie !
Dear are thy hill-girt shores to me,
And fain my weary eyes would see
Thy fair green fields, mine Acadie !

But many a year has gone its way
 And lost itself in Time's broad sea,
 And life waxed cold and dull and gray—
 Since last I looked on Acadie.
 O Acadie ! dear Acadie !
 Clear run thy streams, mine Acadie ;
 On their green banks I fain would be,
 Where fields are fair in Acadie !

They tell me of a land more fair
 Than fairest vale of Acadie ;
 They tell me I am welcome there
 For sake of One who died for me ;
 But yet, methinks, mine Acadie,
 From heaven my heart would turn to thee ;
 No fields can ever fairer be,
 Or land more dear than Acadie !

LAURA SECORD.

During the so-called war of 1812-14 between England and the United States, Laura Secord, the wife of a crippled British veteran, saved the British forces from surprise and possible destruction by the heroic action narrated in the ballad. Her home lay near the celebrated Queenston Heights, a few miles from the Falls of Niagara.

SOFTLY the spell of moonlight fell
 On the swift river's flow,
 On the gray crags of Queenston Heights,
 And the green waves below. .

Alone the whip-poor-will's sad cry
 Blent with the murmuring pines,
 Save where the sentry paced his rounds
 Along th' invading lines.

But in one lowly cottage home
 Were trouble and dismay ;
 Two anxious watchers could not sleep
 For tidings heard that day ;

Brave James Secord, with troubled heart,
And weary crippled frame,
That bore the scars of Queenston Heights,
Back to his cottage came ;

For he had learned a dark design
Fitzgibbon to surprise,
As with a handful of brave men
At Beaver Dam he lies.

‘ And Boerstler, with eight hundred men,
Is moving from the shore
To steal upon our outpost there,
Guarded by scarce two score !

‘ Then, wiping out, as well he may,
That gallant little band,
The foe will sweep his onward way
O’er the defenceless land.

‘ Then noble Brock had died in vain—
If but Fitzgibbon knew !’—
And the poor cripple’s heart is fain
To press the journey through.

But Laura, bending o’er her babes,
Said, smiling through her tears :
‘ These are not times for brave men’s wives
To yield to craven fears.

‘ *You* cannot go to warn our men,
Or slip the outposts through ;
But if perchance they let *me* pass,
This errand I will do.’

She soothed his anxious doubts and fears :
She knew the forest way ;
She put her trust in Him who hears
His children when they pray !

Soon as the rosy flush of dawn
Glowed through the purple air,
She rose to household tasks—and kissed
Her babes with whispered prayer.

To milk her grazing cow she went ;
The sentry at the lines
Forgot to watch, as both were lost
Amid the sheltering pines.

The rising sun's first golden rays
Gleamed through the forest dim,
And through its leafy arches rang
The birds' sweet morning hymn.

The fragrant odour of the pines,
The carols gay and sweet,
Gave courage to the fluttering heart,
And strength to faltering feet.

And on she pressed, with steadfast tread,
Her solitary way,
O'er tangled brake and sodden swamp
Through all the sultry day.

Though, for the morning songs of birds
She heard the wolf's hoarse cry,
And saw the rattlesnake glide forth,
As swift she hurried by.

Nor dark morass nor rushing stream
Could balk the steadfast will,
Nor pleading voice of anxious friends
Where stood St. David's Mill.

The British sentry heard her tale,
And cheered her on her way ;
But bade her 'ware the Indian scouts
Who in the covert lay.

Anon, as cracked a rotten bough
Beneath her wary feet,
She heard their war-whoop through the gloom,
Their steps advancing fleet ;

But quickly to the questioning chief
She told her errand grave
How she had walked the livelong day
Fitzgibbon's men to save !

The redskin heard, and kindly gazed
 Upon the pale-faced squaw ;
 Her faithful courage touched his heart,
 Her weary look he saw.

‘ Me go with you ’ was all he said,
 And through the forest gray
 He led her safe to Beaver Dam,
 Where brave Fitzgibbon lay.

With throbbing heart she told her tale ;
They heard with anxious heed,
 Who knew how grave the crisis was,
 How urgent was the need !

Then there was riding far and near,
 And mustering to and fro
 Of troops and Indians from the rear
 To meet the coming foe ;

And such the bold, determined stand
 Those few brave soldiers made—
 So fiercely fought the Indian band
 From forest ambushade,—

That Boerstler in the first surprise
 Surrendered in despair,
 To force so small it scarce could serve
 To keep the prisoners there !

While the brave weary messenger
 In dreamless slumber lay,
 And woke to find her gallant friends
 Were masters of the fray.

* * * *

If e’er Canadian courage fail,
 Or loyalty grow cold,
 Or nerveless grow Canadian hearts,
 Then be the story told—

How British gallantry and skill
 There played their noblest part,
 Yet scarce had won if there had failed
 One woman’s dauntless heart ! . .

QUEBEC TO ONTARIO,

A PLEA FOR THE LIFE OF RIEL, SEPTEMBER, 1885.

You have the land our fathers bought
With blood, and toil, and pain,
De Monts' and Cartier's earnest thought—
The life-blood of Champlain.

From fair Acadia's rock-bound strand
To wide Ontario's shore,
Where Norman swords fought hand to hand
The Iroquois of yore,

And those great western wilds afar,
Where wandering Indians roam,
And where the hardy voyageur
First reared his cabin home ;—

All, all is yours ; from east to west
The British banner streams,
But in a conquered people's breast
Will live its early dreams !

So, when your rich men grudge our poor,
Homes on their native plains,
The blood of the old voyageur
Leaps boiling in our veins.

And one whose heart was fired at sight
Of suffering and wrong
Took arms, in evil hour, to fight,
For weakness—with the strong.

His wild scheme failed ; how could it stand
Against such fatal odds ?
And brave hearts sleep in yon far land
Beneath the prairie sods !

He stands a traitor at the bar
Of your cold modern laws,
And yet, to him who woke the war,
It seemed a patriot cause !

Nay, more, perchance, the sore distress
That stirred the bitter fray,
Through *that*, has pierced to ears that else
Had still been deaf to-day ;—

While he who sought his people's weal,
Who loved his nation well,
The prisoner of your fire and steel,
Lies doomed in felon's cell !

Pity the captive in your hand,
Pity the conquered race ;
You—strong, victorious in the land—
Grant us the victor's grace !

CANADA OUR HAME.

DEDICATED TO SCOTTISH READERS.

Fu' mony a Scottish bard has praised, i' mony a noble sang,
The hills and glens of Scotia's isle, frae whilk our fathers
sprang.

How shall we fitly celebrate in patriotic strain
The praises o' the bonnie lan' we proudly ca' our ain ?
A lan' the foreign potentate misca'ed 'some leagues o'
snaw,'

When frae his faint an' feckless grip he lat it slip awa' ;—
A lan' sae stored wi' wealth untauld aneath its rugged
grace,

Sae rich in monya pleasant hame an' sheltered bidin'-place !

To east and west gran' mountain-slopes the wide horizon
boun',

An' swathin' robes o' floatin' mists their pine-clad
summits crown ;

Yet grander are the rosy clouds that greet the risin' sun,
An' gowd an' purple tints that wrap him roun' when day
is done !

Though frae the lift we dinna hear the lav'rock's soarin'
sang,

Lintie or mavis whistlin' clear the birken shaws amang,

We hae sweet sangsters o' our ain in ilka bush and tree,
Wha mak' the simmer mornin' sweet wi' gushin' melody !

Fu' sweetly shines the mornin' sun frae oot the lift sae
blue,

An' bright on ilka blade o' grass its crystal drap o' dew,
Hoo balmy is the caller air o' incense-breathing morn,
An' brighter lies the licht o' noon upon the golden corn !
Fu' saftly through the cool green woods the slantin' sun-
beams play,

When shadows lengthen, and the kye hame tak' their
lingerin' way ;

An' when the trystin' hour is come, an' hearts wi' luv
are thrang,

Hoo sweetly i' the gloamin' soun's the milkmaid's
evenin' sang !

But when the simmer slips awa' amang the drappin'
flowers,

An' early rime upo' the grass foretells the wintry hours,
What walth o' glory on the woods then meets the
wonderin' sicht,

An' scatters o'er the country-side a shower o' gowden
licht !

The amber fleeces o' the birks, wi' white stems shimmerin'
through,

The maple's gowd an' scarlet, the aik's deep crimson hue,
Wi' purple an' wi' russet mixed, an' feathery larch be-
tween,

An' ower a'—'neath the opal sky, the pine-tree's sombre
green.

An' syne when a' the glory's gane, an' cauld the north
winds blaw,

An' mirk's the lift wi' smoorin' drifts an' blindin' clouds
o' snaw,

Hoo brichtly when the onding's o'er, an' a' the strife is
done,

A pure white warl', in snaw-wreaths wrapt, lies sparklin'
i' the sun !

Hoo gaily ring the merry bells as sleighs gang glidin' by !
Hoo swiftly o'er the glancin' ice the skater seems to fly !

An' when the last reid sunset hue fleets frae the frosty
nicht,
Hoo keen the sparkle o' the stars an' shimmerin' northern
licht !

We dinna see upo' the brae the bonnie bush o' broom,
Nor whins see rich i' gowden glow an' saftly breathed
perfume ;

Nae crimson-tippit gowans glint amang the dewy grass,
Nor primroses alang the lanes smile at us as we pass.
But wi' the breath o' comin' spring the sweet wee May-
flower wakes,

Lily an' violet brichtly smile amang the forest brakes,
An' snaw-white wreaths on blossoming trees make a' the
forest gay,

An' waves o' gowd and purple gleam to hide the year's
decay.

We hae nae castles auld an' gray,—wi' lichen crusted
o'er,—

Grim relics o' the bluidy wars our fathers waged of yore,
Entwined wi' stirrin' tales o' raid an' capture an' relief,
When pibrochs ca'ed the gatherin' clans to rally roun'
their chief !

Nor has each bonnie wimplin' stream an' ilka rocky
scaur,

A tongue an' story o' its ain o' luvè, or dule, or war ;
Some noble memories we keep to whilk we fondly turn,
But scarce can claim a Flodden Field or glorious Bannock-
burn !

But we hae leal, true Scottish hearts within our bosoms yet ;
The prowess of our fathers' arms we never can forget ;
The sangs that fired our fathers' bluid our heritage we
claim,

An' gin the time o' need arrive, their bluid we winna
shame !

True to the Queen we ca' our ain, the flag that o'er us
waves—

The han' that wins the lan'—frae us maun win it o'er our
graves—

The bluid o' some we countit brave hath wat Canadian
sod ;

We'll guard the lan' they died for—for freedom an' for
God !

Methinks I see it a' outspread, frae far Columbia's
strand,

To where the saut sea licks the banks o' misty Newfound-
land ;—

See fertile strath, an' granite isle, an' fertile rollin' lea,
An' bristlin' pine-clad hills that guard the entrance frae
the sea !

I see braid rivers swiftly rin by mony a busy toun,
An' windin' streams, an' rocky scaurs wi' brown waves
dashin' roun',

An' mony a steadin' midst its fields, baith bield an'
trim an' fair,

An' the white steeples o' the kirks that ca' the folk to
prayer !

An' lookin' wistfully along the mists o' comin' years,
Methinks a noble future spread before our lan' appears—
A lan' o' wise, God-fearin' men, no to be bought or
sold ;

A lan' where freedom, truth, an' richt mair precious are
than gold.

The people a' thegither boun' wi' links o' britherhood,
The leaders no for pairty keen, but for the public good—
A lan' where social virtues thrive, an' truth upholds the
state,

An' puirest folk are countit still the brithers o' the
great !

Lang may the doo o' peace outspread her wings aboot
our shores,

An' plenty, wi' a bounteous han', increase our yearly
stores ;

Lang may the stout an' sturdy pine that towers our woods
among

Be emblem o' our gallant sons, upright, an' leal, an'
strang—

Ready to daur in righteous war, a' manly deeds to do,
Steadfast their country's guid to seek—a' change an'
 chances through ;
Amang the nations o' the warl' to win a worthy place,
An' gie to God—who gives us a'—the glory an' the
 praise.

A FRATERNAL GREETING FROM CANADA.

To thee, O sister land, we stretch a sister's hand
 In this thine anxious hour of storm and stress ;
Fain would we stay the tide of trouble, spreading wide,
 Whose rising waves about thee surge and press !

We own the kindred blood that, with its generous flood,
 Sweeps out of sight and mind the ancient feud ;
In our hearts, as in you, the freeman's pulse beats true,
 That hath so oft the tyrant's power withstood !

We dare not judge the need on which thou hast decreed
 To loose the storm of war—the cannon's rage ;
Though, since the world began, man's cruelty to man
 Hath writ its record red on history's page.

Once more the ancient foes in deadly combat close,—
 The proud Armada's heirs,—young Freedom's van ;
If needs must come the fray, we fain would hope and pray
 That from the conflict rise new life for man !

Then, since the die is cast,—the crisis come at last,
 Your sword unsheathed for human weal and right,
Our hearts must go with you, so ye to these stand true,
 While in that sacred Name your cohorts fight.

We needs must grieve for all who, at their country's call,
 For her must fight and fall—they scarce know why ;
But since the choice must be 'Freedom or Tyranny,'
 Our freeborn hearts can make but one reply.

God's justice hallow thee, O standard of the free,
Whether the lion or the eagle lead ;
Our stalwart northern race must keep its ancient place
In Freedom's van, where'er her squadrons speed !

Shoulder to shoulder stand the sea-girt motherland,
The strong young new-world nations that she bore,
Till dawns that happier day when peace and liberty
And righteousness shall reign from shore to shore.

Soon ! soon ! O Prince of Peace, bid war and discord
cease ;
Banish the clash of arms, the blood-stained spears ;
In dew of chrism divine, let a fair new world shine,
And usher in at last love's golden years.

A SONG FOR CANADA.

OUR Canada, young, strong and free,
Whose sceptre stretches far,
Whose hills look down on either sea,
And front the polar star,—
Not for thy greatness, half unknown,
Wide plains or mountains grand,
But,—as we hold thee for our own,—
We love our native land !
God bless our mighty forest-land
Of mountain, lake and river,
Whose loyal sons, from strand to strand,
Sing ' Canada for ever !'

In winter robes of virgin snow
We proudly hail thee ours ;
We crown thee when the south winds blow
' Our Lady of the Flowers ;'

We love thy rainbow-tinted skies,
Thy mystic charm of spring ;
For us thine autumn's gorgeous dyes,
For us thy song-birds sing.
God bless our own Canadian land
Of mountain, lake and river,
Whose loyal sons, from strand to strand,
Sing 'Canada for ever !'

Fair art thou when the summer wakes
The cornfields' yellow gold ;
Thy quiet pastures, azure lakes,
For us their treasures hold ;
To us each hill and dale is dear,
Each rock and stream and glen,
Dear scattered homes of kindly cheer,
And busy haunts of men.
God bless our own Canadian land
Of mountain, lake and river,
Whose loyal sons, from strand to strand,
Sing 'Canada for ever !'

Our sires their old traditions brought,
Their lives of faithful toil ;
For home and liberty they fought
On our Canadian soil.
Queenston, Quebec, and Lundy's Lane
Can stir our pulses still ;
The lands they held through blood and pain
A free-born people fill.
God bless our own Canadian land
Of mountain, lake and river,
Whose loyal sons, from strand to strand,
Sing 'Canada for ever !'

Saxon and Celt and Norman we :—
Each race its memory keeps ;
Yet o'er us all, from sea to sea,
One Red Cross banner sweeps

Long may our Greater Britain stand
 The bulwark of the free !
 But, Canada, our own fair land,
 Our first love is for thee !
 God bless our own Canadian land
 Of mountain, lake and river ;
 Well may thy sons, from strand to strand,
 Sing ' Canada for ever !'

DIRGE OF THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE.

AFTER MAGERSFONTEIN.

Outswelled the pipes to the strains of "The Flowers of the Forest."

OH, strangely o'er the veldt, where winds the Modder
 River,
 Sounds the pibroch on the sultry tropic air ;
 Sadly march the broken remnant, while the bagpipes'
 mournful quiver
 Wails the dead ' flowers ' of Scotland lying there.
 There's a long, lonely grave near by the Modder water,
 Where the round hills rise purple towards the sky,
 And the greening veldt is red with yestreen's cruel
 slaughter,
 There, far from bonnie Scotland, they must lie !
 Oh, there's mourning 'mang the hills and on the
 heather,
 There's sorrow supped in many a strath and
 glen,
 For the gallant hearts that sleep the long last
 sleep together,—
 For the lads who shall ne'er see home again !
 ' Dule and wae ' the bagpipes moan, for the fatal night
 and order
 Sent out lads into the deadly ambushed line,
 But they fought and fell, unflinching, on the sun-baked
 Afric border,
 As their fathers did on Flodden field,—langsyne !

'Steady, men!' the leader shouted, as the storm of
bullets, flying
Rained down, sudden, from the blazing mouth of hell;
Then, 'mid the grassy hillocks, their brave General lay
dying,
With his men around him,—fighting as they fell!
Oh, there's mourning 'mang the hills and on the
heather,
There's sorrow supped in many a strath and
glen,
For the gallant hearts that sleep the long last
sleep together,—
For the lads who shall ne'er see home again!

Bravely charged the 'Light Brigade' through death's
valley, dark and gory,
And there's many a British trophy of renown,
But there's none among them lighted with a more
pathetic glory
Than the tartans that so gallantly went down!
Oh, faithful unto death, they guarded Britain's flag and
honour,
'Mid their ancient foemen fighting,—side by side,—
Though far from bonnie Scotland, their last thought was
upon her,
Let them rest in peace together where they died!
Oh, there's mourning 'mang the hills and on the
heather,
There's sorrow supped in many a strath and
glen,
For the gallant hearts that sleep the long last
sleep together,—
For the lads who shall ne'er see home again!

OUR LADS TO THE FRONT!

EMBARKATION OF THE CANADIAN CONTINGENT FOR
SOUTH AFRICA ;—QUEBEC, OCTOBER 31, 1899.

RING out the British cheer,
Swell forth its loud acclaim,—
The 'true North' sends her children dear
To fight in Britain's name!

They go, as went the knights of old,
O'er seas and arid plains to fare ;—
Not for the love of fame or gold,
But for the British hearts they bear !
They hear the mother land, afar,
Calling her children,—scattered wide ;—
They haste,—as wakes the note of war,—
To face the conflict at her side !

We follow on, with thoughts and prayer
In the rich-freighted vessel's wake,
Through northern chill and tropic air,—
O winds, blow softly, for her sake !
She bears the hopes of hearts that bleed
With parting pain,—with haunting fears ;
Her devious course in safety speed,
Thou Who must guide, where duty steers!

What years of peace essayed to do
Sorrow and danger swift complete,—
Fuse our great Empire through and through
Till, with one throb, its pulses beat.
One prayer is breathed o'er sea and land
From Queen and peasant, cot and hall,
From snow-capped hills, to sunbaked strand,
God guard our soldiers—one and all !

O God of Justice, Truth, and Right,
Who seest as no mortal may,—
Whose hand can guide through passion's night—
To dawning of a glorious day—

Grant victory as thou deemest best,
Turn hate to love,—bid slaughter cease,
Lay sword in sheath and lance in rest,
And bring our warriors home in peace !

Ring out the British cheer !
Swell forth its loud acclaim !
The 'true North' sends her children dear
To fight in Britain's name !

II.

CANADIAN WOODNOTES.

IN THE FOREST.

MID the cloistered forest arches,
 'Neath the quivering hemlock shade,
Where the tassels of the larches
 Toss their incense through the glade,
Where the bracken's clustered masses
 Wave beneath the sheltering pines,
And the sumach interlaces
 With a tangle of wild vines,

There—like touch of fairy fingers,
 Parting light the leafy screen—
Every ray of sunlight lingers
 Mid the mystery of green,
Many a web of shadow tracing
 O'er green stones and mosses bright,
Through the beechen covert threading
 Quivering skeins of golden light.

Low amid the bending beeches
 Many a wilding blossom blows ;
Scarce its tiny life outreaches
 The safe covert where it grows.
Waxen-pure or tender-tinted,
 In the solitude they bloom ;
Scarcely is their presence hinted
 By their subtle, faint perfume.

Through the boughs light forms are winging,
And—unseen but sweetly heard—
In a burst of low, sweet singing
Comes the carol of a bird.
So, amid the silence dreaming,
Many a vagrant fancy wakes,
Like the blossoms shyly gleaming
Mid the tangled forest brakes ;

And we listen to the murmur
Of the wandering summer breeze,
Till we feel our kinship firmer
With the birds, and flowers, and trees ;
Till we reach its living centre—
Till to us its heart is bare,
And the souls that reverent enter
Meet God in His temple there !

SPRING BIRDS.

FROM southern shores and summer seas,
Where wanders wild the fragrant breeze,
Where mangrove copse and stately palm
In still lagoon are mirrored calm,
O'er orange groves, on tireless wing,
Northward they've come—our birds of spring.

What impulse strange their flight hath sped ?
Their course what guiding thought hath led ?
From climes where summer reigns alway
What fancy moved their flight to stray,
And pour, our leafless boughs among,
Their ecstasy of joyous song ?

We know not now, nor can we tell
Why these same songs our pulses swell
With bounding life and waking dreams
Of rustling leaves and murmuring streams ;
What magic o'er our spirits bring
The rainbow-tinted skies of spring—

Whence comes the rapture, vague but sweet,
 With which each wilding flower we greet,
 Or breathe the scent of budding trees,
 That fill with balm the April breeze—
 Or why the weariest heart is stirred
 By carols of the early bird !

We may not thread the mysteries
 Through which our human pathway lies :
 Enough to know that all the range
 Of form and thought, of life and change—
 In countless types—develop still
 One central unity of will !

Ourselves a part of one grand whole,
 Inspired throughout by living soul,
 Which dimly to our heart reveals
 The Presence Nature still conceals,—
 Beyond our highest thoughts to trace,
 And yet—our Home and Dwelling-place !

THE SOUTH-WEST WIND.

LET who will extol the north wind,
 Keen with frost and blinding snow ;
 I will praise the sweet sou'-wester
 As the fairest wind I know.
 When old Boreas' savage splendour
 Has at length its course outrun,
 And, from skies of April, tender,
 Smiles the northward-veering sun ;

When in warm and sheltered places,
 From brown beds of leafage sere,
 Pale young blossoms lift sweet faces,
 Shyly poised 'twixt hope and fear,
 Comes the soft sou'-wester, blowing
 From the isles of spice and palm,
 Fields and woods with blossoms strewing,
 Filling all the air with balm.

Life-restorer, beauty-giver,
Making hearts, with longing sore,
Throb to see the captive river
Sparkle in the sun once more ;
While the happy thrush is telling
Sweet bird-gossip to his love,—
How the fragrant buds are swelling
On the bending boughs above ;—

How the lily-bells are ringing
Wedding-chimes upon the breeze,
Fragrant flowers their censers swinging
For the butterflies and bees ;—
How, the velvet mosses leaving,
Ferns their crosiers green upraise ;—
How thy fairy touch is weaving—
Wreaths of bloom round woodland ways.

Glad we hail thee, south wind, bringing
Foretaste sweet of fairer things,
Of the woodland, gay with singing,
Of the rush of airy wings ;
Happy toil of hopeful sower,—
Bloom of summer's glorious prime,
Golden sheaves that bless the mower
In the joyous autumn-time.

Let who will extol the north wind,
Reigning king of frost and death ;
Nature-lovers hail the south wind,
Warm with life-awaking breath,
Bearing, to our human sadness,
Dreams of beauty far above
All our earthly spring of gladness
In eternal light and love !

AN APRIL DAY.

THE calm, sweet brightness of an April day
Broods o'er the earth, and floods the quiet air,
Which holds its breath, as if the gentle play
Of even a breeze would break a dream so fair,
So sweet the charmèd stillness everywhere !

The lake lies like a radiant mirror spread ;
No ripple breaks its calm and glassy breast ;
The lightest cloud that flecks the blue o'erhead
Is in the blue below again expressed,
Unbroken image of most perfect rest !

And yet, beneath the calm, a myriad lives
Are pressing through the silence to the sun,
With strength that conquers, though it never strives;—
So tranquilly its destined task is done,
As, without haste, the yearly race is run.

O Nature—grand and strong, and fair and calm,
How dost thou shame our passionate despair !
Thy very work is rest, thy life is calm,
The breath of spring—the essence of the prayer,
That seems to rise about us everywhere.

So may we each our destined task fulfil
In patient toil and sweet tranquillity,
Unhasting and unresting—faithful still
To higher impulse, hidden strength and stay,
With the sweet calmness of this April day !

THE LEGEND OF THE MAYFLOWER.

(THE TRAILING ARBUTUS, THE SPECIAL FLOWER OF NOVA
SCOTIA.)

WHEN the maple wears its tassels and the birch-buds
grow apace,
And the willows gleam out golden in the sunset's tender
grace,

And the ferns amid the mosses first their curly heads
uprear,

Then awakes our wilding blossom, first and fairest of the
year—

The Mayflower—oh, the Mayflower!—sweet of scent and
fair to see,

Tiny, trailing pink arbutus,—chosen flower of Acadie!

Sheltered 'neath the drooping pine - boughs,—see its
tendrils creeping low,

Gleam in fresh and glistening verdure through the swiftly
melting snow,

Till the pink buds in the sunshine open wide their throats
to fling

From their censers, rarest incense on the balmy air of
spring—

The Mayflower—oh, the Mayflower!—sweet of scent and
fair to see,

How we hail thee in the springtime—chosen flower of
Acadie!

There's the robin, plaintive fluting in the budding boughs
above,

And the cat-bird sweetly warbling for the pleasure of his
love;

Are they telling the old story, how a gentle Indian maid,
Vainly seeking her lost lover, through the forest tireless
strayed?

The Mayflower—oh, the Mayflower!—sweet of scent and
fair to see,

All the woodland feels thy fragrance, chosen flower of
Acadie!

Do they tell how—mid her sorrow for the one she held
so dear—

Every sad and suffering creature still she sought to help
and cheer,

Till there sprang up, in the pathway of her ministering
feet,

The bright Mayflower's tender blossoms—full of frag-
rance rare and sweet?

The Mayflower—oh, the Mayflower !—sweet of scent and
fair to see,
Filled with all the springtime's sweetness—chosen flower
of Acadie !

Passing years bring many changes—joy and sorrow come
and go,

Yet unchanged the Mayflower wakens at the melting of
the snow ;

Though unseen, its fragrance, breathing through the
budding woodland maze,

Brings sweet foretaste of the summer to the changeful
April days.

The Mayflower—oh, the Mayflower !—sweet of scent and
fair to see,

With love's fragrant breath thou'rt laden, chosen flower
of Acadie !

Years have glided into ages, and the centuries grown gray,
Still as fresh and sweet as ever does the Mayflower greet
the May ;

And the heaviest heart grows lighter as it hails thy promise
true

Of the love that lives for ever, and shall make all old
things new !

The Mayflower—oh, the Mayflower !—sweet of scent and
fair to see,

Shedding spring's divinest fragrance through the woods
of Acadie !

THE COMING OF THE SPRING.

WHAT subtle presence the air is filling,

Our pulses thrilling ;

What strange mysterious sense of gladness

Transfused with sadness ;

Trembling in opal and purple hues

That wake and melt in the azure high,

Brooding in sunbeams that suffuse

With the light of hope, the fields that lie

Quiet and gray 'neath the sunset sky ?

Thor's thunder-hammer hath waked the earth
To a glad new birth—
The birth of the fresh, young, joyous spring,
New blossoming ;—
Bidding the south wind softly blow,
Loosing the tongues of the murmuring streams,
Sending the sap with a swifter flow
Through the bare brown trees, and waking dreams
Of summer shadows and golden gleams !

Down in the budding woods unseen,
Amid mosses green,
The fair hepatica wakes to meet
The hastening feet
Of the children that soon, with laughter sweet,
Shall shout with glee to find it there,
And bear it homeward—the herald meet
Of the countless bells and blossoms fair
That shall ring sweet chimes on the balmy air.

And tiny ferns their fronds unbind
By streams that wind—
Singing a song in soft undertones—
O'er the smooth brown stones ;
And pure white lilies and purple phlox,
And violets yellow and white and gray,
And columbines gleaming from lichened rocks,
And dogwood blossoms and snowy may,
Shall wreath with beauty each woodland way !

Soon, in the shadow of dewy leaves
About our eaves,
The chorister-birds shall their matins ring,
Sweet carolling ;
While, through the bowery orchard trees,
All sprinkled with drifts of scented snow,
Comes the fragrant breath of the morning breeze,
And over the long lush grass below
Soft wavering shadows glide to and fro.

But when shall the better Spring arise
 Beneath purer skies—
 The Spring that can never pass away
 Nor know decay,—
 Sending new joy through the stricken heart,
 Waking new life from the silent tomb,
 Joining the souls that have moved apart,
 Bidding earth's winter for ever depart,
 With incompleteness, pain, and gloom,
 Till—ransomed at last from its inwrought doom—
 It shall blossom forth in immortal bloom ?

WELCOME TO THE HEPATICA, OR LIVER- WORT.

LET them sing of the lily and rose as they will,
 Of the daisy and daffodil poets hold dear ;
 There's a blossom *we* welcome as lovelier still,
 As it wakes in the woods in the spring of the year—
 The tiny Hepatica, welcome and dear.
 How it pierces the brown leaves so withered and sere,
 With its delicate fairness, its exquisite rareness !
 How it gladdens our eyes in the spring of the year !
 How it whispers that winter is over at last,
 That the time of the singing of birds is at hand !
 How it blends with the music of streams rushing fast,
 And the note of the robin that thrills through the land !
 So fragile and graceful, so welcome and dear,
 As it smiles 'mid the brown leaves so withered and sere,
 In its exquisite rareness, its delicate fairness ;
 How it gladdens our thoughts in the spring of the year !
 How it comes like a vision of beauty, that soon
 Shall deck all the woods in a bridal of bloom,—
 The waving luxuriant foliage of June,
 The breezes that bring us a wealth of perfume !
 Yet none to our hearts is more welcome and dear
 Than thine, breathing out from the leaves brown and sere,
 In thine exquisite rareness, thy delicate fairness ;
 How they gladden our hearts in the spring of the year !

For thou comest when trees are still leafless and bare,
When the last patch of snow has scarce melted away ;
When even the Shad-flower* still shrinks from the air,
Thy soft stars shine out from a background of gray—
A herald of hope with a message of cheer
Peeping out from the brown leaves so withered and sere,
With thy delicate fairness, thine exquisite rareness ;
How they gladden our souls in the spring of the year !

MAY-DAYS.

OH ! the days are fair when May has come,
With the robin's call and the wild bee's hum,
In each forest-nook a shimmer of green
Glancing in sunlight and dewy sheen ;
While a snowy bloom wreathes the budding bough
So gray and leafless and bare—but now !
For the woods have waked from the wintry night
'Neath the kiss of the sunshine soft and bright,
And the meadows bask in the golden light
When May is here,
The fairest month in the circling year !

For May has brought us the blossoms sweet
That hide in the brown leaves 'neath our feet :
Pale hepaticas, just awake,
Peep shyly out from the woodland brake ;
Dewy violets with tender faces,
Lilies shining in shady places,
Columbines tufting the rock's gray side
By the quiet waters' azure tide ;
For the earth is fair in the sweet May-tide,
Fair and bright
Are the woodlands with snowy bloom bedight !

And the air is filled with the wandering scent
Of the bursting leaves with the zephyr blent ;

* The 'shad-bush' is the popular Canadian name for the white blossoming shrub, *Amelanchier Canadense*, earliest bloomer in Canadian woods.

And the birds pour forth from their tiny throats
Showers of music in clamouring notes,
Till the soft breeze throbs with the tide of song
The matin-chant of the joyous throng ;—
Till bud and blossom and flower and bee
Seem mingled in perfect symphony
Of the season's exquisite witchery !

Words may not tell
The charm of the May and its magic spell.

For hope is so bright when the year is young,
And the bridal song of earth is sung
By myriad voices mingling clear
In the morning hymn of the waking year.
Lost is the mournful minor tone
In the swell of the great diapason ;
Life and gladness resume their sway,
And even to sorrow they seem to say,
 'Smiles conquer tears,
And joy shall rule the immortal years !'

THE HERALDS OF SPRING.

LONG hath the dreary winter's chilling hand
Been laid upon the frost-imprisoned land,
And long the north wind's keen and bitter blast
Hath swept the fleecy snowflakes wildly past
In powdery drifts and clouds of icy spray,
Whirling aloft and darkening all the day ;
Or, calm and still, the snow with noiseless fall
Sank down on tree and bush, enfolding all
In a soft, fragile foliage, that might seem
The passing vision of a fairy dream ;
And draped the earth in mantle fair and white,
Crusted with diamonds dazzling in their light ;
Drift piled on drift oppressed the buried ground,
An Arctic landscape seemed to stretch around.
Long slept the land fast bound in frozen chains,
All blank and dreary lay the snow-clad plains,

Too coldly fair such wintry glories show
To eyes grown weary of perpetual snow !

But *now* a gentler breath pervades the air,
The opening skies a softer azure wear ;
The snow has vanished at the south wind's breath,
And Nature wakens from her seeming death ;
The lakes and streams, set free from icy chain,
Flash their blue waters to the sun again !
We hear once more the rushing torrent's flow,
The fragrance of the 'unbound earth' we know !
The soft, sweet tinkle of the streamlet seems
To lull our senses to delicious dreams,
And soft and sweet the light of evening lies
On quiet fields beneath the sunset skies.
She comes ! although we chide her tardy wing,
We hail the welcome advent of the Spring !
And through our memory breathes the old, sweet strain,
So often heard, yet gladly heard again :
'The winter's past and gone, the flowers appear,
The time of singing of the birds is here !'

Already by our gladdened ears is heard
The welcome twitter of the early bird,
And, ere the winter blasts are wholly fled,
The pure white Blood-root lifts her gentle head.
Half shrinking from the rude, ungenial air,
She bends to earth her petals waxen fair,
As if afraid to feel herself alone,
On the bleak threshold of the winter thrown.
Yet in her fragile beauty, faithful still,
She seems her welcome errand to fulfil,
To glad our longing eyes with promise true
Of all the beauty soon to burst to view !

Ere yet the lingering snow the woods has left,
But tarries late in many a rocky cleft,
The waking ferns their curling fronds uncoil,
And velvet moss o'erspreads the spongy soil.
Ere yet her glossy leaves have donned their green,
The shy Hepatica from downy screen

Opens her soft-hued cups in lovely bloom,
 Filled with the spring's most delicate perfume ;—
 Wood-violets follow, opening to the light
 Their changeful tints of yellow, blue and white ;
 Tall Trilliums waving in the woodland dells ;
 The bright Dicentra, with her clustered bells ;
 May-apple white, beneath broad shield of green,
 Meet canopy of state for fairy queen ;
 With the dark Arum and the Cranebill bright,
 And Convallaria's drooping clusters white ;
 The small Mitella's feathery shaft appears,
 Piercing the sodden leaves of bygone years ;
 By the dark cleft of some old rugged pine
 Wave the bright blossoms of the Columbine,
 While hawthorn boughs their snowy burden bear,
 Wafting spring fragrance through the balmy air ;
 The summer hours more gorgeous blossoms bring,
 But none so dear,—sweet heralds of the Spring !

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL.

OH, Whip-poor-Will ! oh, Whip-poor-Will !
 When all the joyous day is still,
 When from the sky's fast deepening blue
 Fades out the sunset's rosy hue,
 We hear thy steady, measured trill
 From woodland shade, oh Whip-poor-Will !

In the soft dusk of dewy May,—
 At pensive close of autumn day,
 All other birds may silent be,
 Or flood the air with minstrelsy :
 Thou carest not—eve brings us still
 Thy plaintive burden,—‘ Whip-poor-Will !’

When moonlight floods the summer night
 With a soft vision of delight,
 We listen till we fain would ask
 For thee, some respite from thy task.

At dawn we wake, and hear it still,
Thy plaintive song—oh Whip-poor-Will !
We hear thy voice, but see not thee ;
Thou seemest but a voice to be,
 A wandering spirit, breathing yet
 For parted joys a vain regret ;
So plaintive thine untiring trill
At dawn or dusk,—oh Whip-poor-Will !
So faithful to thy strange refrain,
Is it the voice of joy or pain ?
 We cannot know—thou wilt not tell
 The secret kept so long and well,
What moves thee thus to warble still
Thine endless plaint—oh Whip-poor-Will !

SPRING'S UNDERTONE.

THIS is no day for sadness ;—let me breathe
The sweet, pure air beneath the clear blue sky,
While visions, lovely in their vagueness, wreath
Their misty forms before the dreaming eye,
Entranced to look upon their witchery !
This is no day for sadness ! When the sun
Is draped in weeping clouds of sullen gray,
Or when the tranquil autumn day is done,
And early twilight sleeps upon the bay—
 Then may we sigh for blessings passed away !
And yet, why is it that on days like these,
When Nature wears her sweetest, sunniest face,
When all the air is sweet with budding trees,
And flowers bloom softly in each sunny place,
And clothe the waking earth with tender grace,
And joyous birds their merry carols sing,
Our hearts can never rise to notes like theirs,—
A strain of sadness wanders through the spring,—
The very perfectness of Nature bears
A spell that weighs our hearts down unawares ?

Is it that budding woods and opening flowers,—
All the fresh life that gladdens our dull earth,
Seem but to flout this fleeting life of ours,
That here, at least, knows no new vernal birth,
And seemeth oft to us so little worth?

Or is it that fair Nature's unstained face
Wakes yearnings for the purity we prize
And cannot reach?—that Spring's fresh, undimmed grace
Wakes sadness in us most when to the skies,
In unchecked gladness, all her anthems rise?

Yet may our restless souls in this rejoice,
That every unchecked aspiration here,
Each vague, half-conscious yearning is a voice
Calling us onward—if we will but hear—
To higher life and growth in nobler sphere!

DRIFTING AMONG THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

NEVER a ripple on all the river,
As it lies like a mirror beneath the moon,
Only the shadows tremble and quiver
'Neath the balmy breath of a night in June!
All dark and silent, each shadowy island
Like a silhouette lies on its silver ground,
While just above us a rocky highland
Towers grim and dusk, with its pine-trees crowned.

Never a sound but the waves' soft splashing,
As the boat drifts idly the shore along,
And the darting fireflies, silently flashing,
Gleam—living diamonds—the woods among,
And the night-hawk flits o'er the bay's deep bosom,
And the Loon's laugh breaks through the midnight
calm,
And the luscious breath of the wild vine's blossom
Wafts from the rocks like a tide of balm!

Drifting—why may we not drift for ever ?
Let all the world and its warfare go ;
Let us float and drift with the flowing river,
Whither—we neither care nor know !
Dreaming a dream—might we ne'er awaken !
There's joy enough in this passive bliss,
The wrestling crowd and its cares forsaking,
Was ever Nirvana more blest than this ?

Nay ! but our hearts are ever lifting
The veil of the present, however fair ;
Not long—not long can we go on drifting,
Not long enjoy surcease from care !
Ours is a nobler task and guerdon
Than aimless drifting, however blest ;
Only the heart that can bear the burden
Shall share the joy of the victor's rest !

A SUMMER SUNSET.

COME, dear, lay down your book awhile, to rest,
While sinks the sun behind yon wooded crest ;—
Leave human lore for less enchanted hours
That dull the skies and steal away the flowers ;
Now Nature's face is too bewitching sweet,
God's thoughts seem writ in beauty at our feet !

There, on the river, rose and opal seem
To melt and mingle in the placid stream,
Blent with ethereal tones of purple hue,
With gleams of palest azure breaking through
The softened double of those rose-flushed skies,
Bathed in whose glamour all the landscape lies
Like dreamland !—See how fair each mirrored isle
Still fairer in its shadow seems to smile,
While silently the light canoe glides o'er
The enchanted river towards the farther shore !
It seems that Nature's self stands still with us,
While through her temple-rings her Angelus ;

Ev'n yon small bird has ceased his happy trill,
On the high pine-top perched, all hushed and still,
As if he listened to some sweeter strain
He fain would catch and give to us again !

So let *us*, too, leave lower thoughts and things
To catch the nobler strain that Nature sings !
What boots it though we could, with curious eye,
Thread all her hidden paths of mystery ;—
See how she fashions in her inmost shrine
Her myriad-featured beauty, line by line ;—
Trace life's long growth from earliest dawn to day,
And measure all the laws its forms obey,—
If in our searching we should miss the soul
That animates, inspires, informs the whole ?

In such an hour as this—if but we will,
While *that* is speaking, listen and be still—
Our hearts shall feel, soft breathing through the calm,
The brooding love that drops like healing balm ;—
Feel the Great Infinite we vainly seek
To grasp with thought—for such a task too weak—
Now close and sweet, as kiss by mother pressed
On her tired child close folded to her breast !

THE INDIAN PIPE.

AMID the clustering beeches, hidden deep,
Where scarce at noon the July sunbeams creep,
Where, on the bough, the humming-bird's small nest
Seems, like a knot of lichen, light to rest,
From the dead leaves of last year's autumn ripe
Rise the white clusters of the Indian Pipe.

Is it an earthly flower or ghostly shade,
From fields Tartarean to our forest strayed ?
Or wrought from stainless marble, carven fine
By cunning sculptor in a quaint design,
In mimic semblance of the pipe of peace
That warriors smoke when war and havoc cease ?

All waxen white in stem, and leaf, and flower
It stands—a vision strange in summer bower ;
But whence the form its bending blossoms wear ?
Does the pale bloom a runic legend bear ?
Then murmuring rose the breeze of eventide,
And, whispering low, an ancient sorrow sighed !

Here, long ago, amid this sylvan shade,
There grew, in budding bloom, an Indian maid,
Her father's only child—his joy and pride ;—
She seemed a lily by a cedar's side.
Careless she roamed, until one fatal day
A pale-face stranger stole her heart away.

Could a chief's daughter with such lover go ?
Leave sire and nation for her people's foe ?
Nay ! better death than baseness such as this !
Yet youth and joy went with his parting kiss ;—
And, like another Iphigenia brave,
Swift-ebbing life for sire and race she gave !

But one last boon she sought with parting life—
That with her death should end the vexing strife :
'Twixt white and red man war and feud should cease,
While o'er her grave they smoked the pipe of peace ;
And there, ere maize and wilding rice were ripe,
Sprang the pale clusters of the Indian Pipe !

AN AUGUST MORNING.

In gleam of pale translucent amber woke
The perfect August day ;
Through rose-flushed bars of pearl and amber broke
The sunset's golden way.

The river seemed transfigured in its flow
To tide of amethyst,
Save where it rippled o'er the sands below,
And granite boulders kissed.

The clouds of billowy woodland hung unstirred
In languorous slumber deep,
While, from its green recesses, one small bird
Piped to its brood asleep.

The clustering lichens wore a tenderer tint,
The rocks a warmer glow ;
The emerald dewdrops, in the sunbeam's glint,
Gemmed the rich moss below.

Our birchen shallop idly stranded lay
Half mirrored in the stream,
Wild roses drooped, glassed in the tiny bay,
Ethereal as a dream !

You sat upon your rock, enthroned a queen,
As on a granite throne,
And all that world of loveliness serene
Held but us twain alone.

Nay ! but we felt another presence there,
Around, below, above ;
It breathed a poem through the fragrant air—
Its name was LOVE !

THE HAPPY ISLANDS.

PAST the 'Rocks in Deep Water,'* winding its way to
the sea,
Sweeps our mighty St. Lawrence, grand, majestic and free ;
Yet methinks he tarries, as glad to linger awhile
Amid the mazy channels where the happy islands smile.
Fair do they seem as Eden, when Eden was newly made,
To the wearied city toilers who seek their grateful shade ;
Far from the hurry and clamour, far from the bustle and
din,
See the cool and shady recesses that lure the wanderer
in !

* Meaning of Indian name, 'Gananoque.'

Soft in the haze of morning, their shadowy masses seem
To rest on the calm blue water like the phantasm of a
dream ;

Dark in the glare of noonday their bowers of foliage stand,
Spreading their deep, cool shadow like rocks in a weary
land ;

But when at close of his journey the sun rides down the
west,

Trailing his crimson and purple o'er the river's opal breast,
Then, like isles of the blessed, bathed in celestial light,
They float between earth and heaven like a mystic
vision bright.

Happy the careless paddler who steers his light canoe
O'er the mingling ruby and topaz, the purple shadows
through,

While the stroke of the ashen paddle beneath the skilful
arm

Scarce clouds the magic mirror, or breaks the wondrous
charm ;

And when the mystic moonlight, with its white unearthly
spell,

Like a vision of enchantment clothes river and rock
and dell,

How the lights and shadows tremble with a hidden mystery,
And the silhouettes of the islands lie dark on the silver
sea !

TO A FRIEND IN EUROPE.

' Cælum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt.'

I, HERE amid Canadian pines,
Whose floating fragrance fills the air ;
Where rocks are green with tangled vines,
And ferns are waving everywhere ;

Where, under long, dark hemlock boughs,
Bright waves leap sparkling to the sun,
Or rest 'neath pine-crowned craggy brows
In purple state, when day is done !

You, where, amid bright southern flowers,
You gaze on soft, blue southern seas,
And,—framed in vine and olive boughs,—
The summits of the Pyrenees ;—

Where, o'er the château's vine-clad wall
You watch the sunset's glorious dream,
When, softly kissed by golden mist,
The Titans all transfigured seem ;—

Or, passing from the quaint old town,
You wander up their rocky base,
While laden peasants clamber down
The winding, walnut-shaded ways ;—

Or, seaward turned, your eyes explore
Soft gleaming hills and headlands bare ;
The sleeping sea and sunlit shore,
And crags that swim in purple air !

What matter, 'neath those skies or these,
We share the long sweet summer day,
Where myrtle blossoms scent the breeze,
Or feathery hemlocks fringe the bay ?

So, only, by the waiting soul
Mid rustling leaves or woodland scent,
The spirit that informs the whole
More closely with the heart is blent—

So, in the presence felt of Him
Who seems so near in woodland ways,
We learn, in forest alleys dim,
Sweet lessons for the wintry days,

When death lies chill on vale and hill,
And even a southern sea is gray ;
When fairest skies the storm-clouds fill,
And summer seems so far away !

So, from the heart divine there rise
A fuller spring of love in ours,
Bright hopes for dark November skies;
Warm faith for bleak and wintry hours ;
That faith, to those who seek it given,
Grow still in us as seasons roll,
And—drawing sunshine straight from heaven—
Keep living summer in the soul !

THE CREEK.

WHISPERING, plashing, rippling, dashing
Merrily over its pebbly bed,
Its mimic cataracts foaming, flashing
In golden gleams from the sky o'erhead ;
Dropping elms and bending beeches
Glass themselves in its limpid stream,
As it seems to sleep in shadowy reaches
Where the lilies float and the herons dream ;
Yet ever onward the creek runs free,
Singing the song that it sang to me !
In the fragrant breeze of the dewy morning
Merrily soundeth its woodland song,
Catching the light as—the darkness scorning—
With gold enwoven, it dances along ;
Over the pebbles in happy gushes
The wavelets are hurrying, crystal clear,
And it sings to the child mid the long, tall rushes,
A song that he stops from his play to hear ;
And he falls asleep in a happy dream
To the lullaby of the woodland stream !
In a pensive murmur the stream is flowing,
When the noonday heat stills the morning breeze ;
It ripples soft through the rushes growing
Where it winds its course 'neath the whispering
trees.

To the maiden who sits by the margin dreaming
It murmurs the notes of a sweet love-song,
And her face with a smile and a blush is beaming
At the name it breathes as it glides along,
Till love and thought and fancy seem
Lost in the song of the tireless stream.

In the shades of evening, so swift descending,
Still talks the stream with the sighing breeze,
With the trembling shadows above it bending,
While the dusk steals down from the arching trees.
The old man sits where the tall reeds quiver
Silently over the dusky stream,
And he seems to hear in the tiny river
Old echoes from life's long, changeful dream ;
And it whispers to him of the mighty sea
Whither both are tending, the stream and he.

So, ever whispering, rippling, plashing,
O'er its pebbly bed it flows along,
Dark in the shade, in the sunlight flashing,
Still ever singing the same low song !
So it sang to the Indian, as here he wandered,
Chasing the deer in its coverts dim ;
Perchance he heard, as he stood and pondered,
The Spirit's voice in its murmured hymn ;
So it sang, till the child grew to white-haired age,
Till the maiden had turned o'er life's last page ;
Till her dream had faded in long-dried tears,
And its memory passed with the passing years !
And still, like Time's river, it ceaseth never,
But—full of life's present and echoes past—
It seems to sing of the great Forever,
Till it finds its home in the sea at last,
And hushes its tiny, troubled song
In that mighty music so grand and strong,
Where all earth's tones seem to mingle calm
In the solemn rhythm of the ocean-psalm !

SEPTEMBER AMONG THE THOUSAND
ISLANDS.

THE long pine branches lightly bend
Above gray rocks with moss o'ergrown,
And rays of golden light descend
Aslant on twisted root and stone ;
All still and silent at our feet
Lies the broad river's glassy sheet.

So calm, so tranquil its expanse ;
No ripple on its peaceful breast ;
It might be sea of fairyland
By some strange magic laid to rest ;
And the gray, hazy islands seem
The vision of a passing dream.

In such soft tints their shores extend,
So dim their winding outlines lie ;—
They do not separate, but blend
The melting hues of lake and sky,
Save where some light-tower's snowy gleam
Is mirrored in the placid stream.

No sounds the dreamy stillness break ;
No echo o'er the lake is heard,
Save that the leaping fishes make,
Or twitter of a lonely bird ;
And summer sweetness seems to stray,
Confused, through the September day !

We watch the swift receding boat,
And long we bend our patient gaze,
And strive to trace it, far afloat,
Through the soft mist's uncertain haze
To catch the latest glimpse we may
Of friends beloved it bears away !

So, often, through the misty veil
That hides from us the spiritland,

We gaze and gaze, till gazing fail,
As on its outer verge we stand,
On cherished forms receding far
To realms that undiscovered are!

A DIRGE FOR THE DYING SUMMER.

ALAS for the dying summer !
Fading so fast away ;
Sad to our sight is her parting smile
In the sweet September day.

For the autumn we know is coming,
On wings that are all too fleet ;
And the summer flowers are shedding fast
Their blossoms at our feet.

The dahlia in robes of velvet
Stands queenly and proud and fair ;
The rainbow hues of the aster
Glow bright in the golden air.

But we scarce can greet them gladly,
For they presage the fading year ;
And the death of the flowers is a sorrowful time,
And the winter looms dark and drear !

Alas for our short-lived summer !
For it seems but a few short days
Since the trees burst forth into joyous leaf,
And the birds sang their bridal lays ;—

Since the rose-flushed apple-blossoms
Wooded the bee to the orchard trees ;
Since the humming-bird sucked at the lilac bloom
That sweetened the fresh May breeze ;

Since the glowing heart of the rose-bud
Was opening, fold on fold ;—
Now the apple hangs ripe o'er the orchard wall,
And the maples are flecked with gold.

Alas for the dying summer !
It seemeth all too soon
For the summer sunshine to fade away,
And the light of the summer moon.

The rose-flushed and purple sunsets,—
The incense-laden night,
The fresh, bright morning's balmy breath,
And the noon, steeped in throbbing light ;

The sparkle of dancing waters,
The gleams through the glancing leaves,
The hum of the bee and the clover scent,
And the twitter beneath the eaves—

All gone ! So the heart dreams sadly !
Yet wherefore shouldst thou repine,
When the love that guides the season's course
Is a higher love than thine ?

'Tis a higher love and a wiser
Bids the seasons come and go,
And the same power that loosens the blossoms now
Shall banish the winter snow.

We may dream of the April sunshine
Through the dull November rain,—
And watch with a calm and hopeful heart
For the spring that shall come again.

And so, when the heart's short summer
Is clouded by storm and strife,
And the mist and darkness gather fast
Round the winter of our life,

We may look through the closing shadows,
Through the tempest and the gloom,
To the light of the spring that is ever green,
And the summer of fadeless bloom !

AN INDIAN SUMMER CAROL.

ALL day the dreaming sunshine steeps
In gold the yellowing beeches ;
In softest blue the river sleeps
Among the island reaches.

Against the distant purple hills
The autumn tints are glowing ;
With blood-red wine the sumach fills,
Rich lines of carmine showing.

Upon the glassy stream the boat
Glides softly like a vision ;
And, with its shadow, seems to float
Among the isles Elysian.

About the plummy golden-rod
The tireless bees are humming ;
The aster's clusters star the sod
And wait the rover's coming.

The birch and maple glow with dyes
Of scarlet, rose, and amber ;
And like a flame from sunset skies,
Bright tangled creepers clamber.

The oaks in Tyrian purple dight
Burn, where the sunlight presses ;
The birch stands like a Dryad bright
Beneath her golden tresses.

So still the air,—so like a dream,
We hear the acorn falling ;
And, o'er the scarcely rippled stream,
The loon's long quavered calling.

The robin* softly o'er the lea,
His farewell song is trilling ;
The squirrel flits from tree to tree,
His winter storehouse filling.

* The Canadian robin, properly a species of thrush.

Like him, we, too, may gather store
From all this glorious nature ;
Then leave, my friend, dry bookish lore
And dreary nomenclature ;

Let logic wintry hours beguile ;
Leave weary mathematics ;
Let Aristotle rest awhile,
And all the Eleatics.

O'er Plato we can talk and muse
When wintry winds are blowing ;
Now Nature bids us not refuse
The glory *she* is showing.

For she herself has better lore
Than all man's cold dissections ;
Her hieroglyphs can teach us more
Than volumes of 'reflections.'

Leave the old thinkers to the dreams
That have been dreamed for ages ;
Leave dry old scientific reams,
And study Nature's pages.

Her poetry is sweeter far
Than all men write about her ;
Old Homer, though his theme was war,
Had scarcely sung without her !

Haste to the woods, throw books away :
They'll wait the tardy comer ;
For *them* there's many a winter day,
But brief's our Indian summer !

OCTOBER GOLD.

SOFTLY the golden sunshine broods
Like kiss of peace, o'er land and sea,
Touching to gold the yellowing woods
With subtle skill of alchemy.

Too soon, alas ! that gold must pass
 Into the dross of dull decay ;
Too soon upon the dewy grass
 The frost its chilling touch must lay.

Too soon, too soon, the glory fades,
 So richly lavished everywhere
That rugged rocks and forest glades
 A more than regal splendour wear !

The purpled oak, the crimson pine,
 The birch in robes of fluttering gold,
The sumach dipped in blood-red wine,
 The maple, reddening the wold—

All drop their glory,—and behind—
 Leave woodlands etched in gray and black,
In which the sun can scarcely find
 A spot to give his glory back.

The transient beauty must decay,
 That we may see the budding year
Wake from the desolation gray
 That makes the bursting life so dear

Nature must rest, that she may keep
 Tryst with the first flowers' blossoming ;
So, like a tired child, let her sleep,
 The while we wake and watch for spring !

ST. MARTIN'S SUMMER.

THE sunbeams fall as softly bright
 And sparkle on the bay ;
As clear the sky, as full of light,
 As in the joyous May.

The robin's and the catbird's call
 Still break the quietude,
The last lone lingerers of all
 The singers of the wood !

Yet still we feel an undertone
Of sadness everywhere,—
In sunshine on the lichened stone,
And in the purple air.

The glory of the golden-rod
That gilds the woodland way
Is far less sweet than clover sod,
Or the white bloom of May !

Still wheels the dainty humming-bird,
His daily sweets to find
Amid the blossoms, still unstirred
By breath of autumn wind ;

And still the gorgeous butterfly
Flits round the brilliant bloom ;
The while for both is drawing nigh
The sure, unwritten doom.

For though the air is full of balm,
The creepers blood-red glow,
Yet, dropping in a soundless calm,
The dead leaves downward go !

But life still underlies decay,
And, to the hearing ear,
The swelling buds behind them say
That spring comes every year.

If these brown leaves, in autumn hours,
Ne'er strewed the woodland ways,
We scarce could hail the waking flowers
In the sweet April days !

GOLDEN-ROD AND ASTERS.

WHEN other blossoms fade and fall,
Oh, faithful to the fading year,
Ye come to us, the last of all
The woodland tribe we hold so dear ;—

Yet while we hail your smile of cheer,
 Almost we grieve again to hold
 Your waving plumes of living gold !
 They speak to us of summer past,
 Of autumn's chill winds, hovering near,
 That soon must strew the yellowing wold
 With wreck of leaf and blossom, fast
 Flying before the wintry blast.
 Yet, Golden-rod, let us forget
 The coming ills that are not yet,
 And,—while we may,—rejoice awhile
 In your bright plumes and Nature's smile !

But not alone *your* golden sheen
 Gleams through the fast dismantling wood,
 For silvery stars, with ray serene,
 Light up the pensive solitude,
 That seems to breathe a mournful mood ;
 And clusters bright of purple rays
 Smile softly to the shortening days.
 Unconscious they of aught to fear,
 Braving the winds, so keen and rude,
 With all the gentle springtime's grace !
 Purple and gold—a royal bier
 Ye spread for the departing year ;
 Yet whisper of a future hour
 When these bare woods—in bud and flower
 Arrayed—another spring shall greet,
 While ye lie withered at our feet !

NOVEMBER FANCIES.

I.

If earth were always bright and fair,
 And skies were always blue ;
 And flowers were blooming everywhere,
 And dreams were true ;—

If pain were not, and death were sought
In vain from shore to shore ;
If haunting fears and parting tears
Were all no more ;—

If hearts once joined were ever bound ;
If friends were ever true—
Why, then this world no place were found
For me and you !

For only perfect hearts, that beat
With calm, unvarying poise,
Keep even way through passion's sway
Through griefs and joys,

Could in a perfect world find place ;
And ours, so frail and weak,
Could never dare a world so rare
To vainly seek !

Let us be patient, then, the while !
When we shall perfect be,
A perfect world shall doubtless smile
For you and me !

II.

The soft, sad autumn rain is falling, falling
Through leafless boughs, from skies o'ercast and gray ;
In all the wood no bird its mate is calling,
For all are fled away !

No sunshine on the sodden grass, and sadly
In mournful heaps, lie dank and sodden leaves,
That but so late were fluttering lightly, gladly,
About our chamber eaves.

Where is the sunshine, and the summer gladness ?
The brooding light and warmth, come they no more ?
And are we left alone in gloom and sadness
Upon a desert shore ?

Nay, but beyond the clouds,—beyond the shadows,
Beyond the dark horizon dull and gray,
The summer sunshine falls on dewy meadows,
And birds sing, all the day.

Somewhere the sun is shining, bright as ever,
And summer leaves are dancing, fresh and fair,
And golden ripples fleck the sparkling river
Somewhere—somewhere !

Let us be glad in our November sorrow
To know that, though unseen, the day is fair
With golden promise of a happier morrow
Somewhere—somewhere !

Nay, that though earth itself were draped in sadness
The eye of faith may see the farther shore,
Where God Himself shall be the light and gladness
Of all, for evermore !

III.

A misty, November evening,
Dreary and sad and gray,
With the raindrops falling, falling,
As they fell the livelong day ;

And the hills—we scarce can see them
Faint through the dropping rain ;
Cold and dark flows the river,
Sobbing as if in pain.

The drooping boughs of the hemlock
Are heavy with gathered tears ;
Sadly the long pine-branches
Wave their diamond-pointed spears.

Oh, where is the bright, glad sunshine
Of the summer morning fair ?
And the mingled rose and purple
Of the summer sunset,—where ?

And where are the friends belovèd
Who stood by the riverside,
Watching the sunset glory
Transfused in the crystal tide ?

Yet there is sunshine somewhere,
Shining on hill-tops bright ;
Somewhere a rosy sunset
Fades into purple night.

Somewhere the friends we see not
Wait for and love us still ;
And the light that shines for ever
Each longing heart shall fill !

PREMONITION.

A SABBATH hush upon the silent woods ;
The songless birds flit by on restless wing ;
'Neath veil of golden haze the sunshine broods ;
As soft as summer and as sweet as spring
The fragrance of the flowers' late blossoming !

The river sleeps so calm, so softly blue,
It seemeth but the double of the sky,
Mid island mazes softly glancing through
Vistas that stretch to dim infinity,
Touching us with vague dreams—we know not why.

But one, with soundless footfall, comes apace,
Bronzing the oak-boughs, yellowing the grass,
Tinging the sumach's fringe with gorgeous grace
Of gold and carmine ; while there seems to pass
A lustrous veil o'er all the forest mass !

It is, we deem, the harbinger of Death,
The golden-haloed prophet of decay ;
And yet, methinks, a hidden whisper saith
That life is life for ever, though it may
Pass through a myriad changes on its way.

So grandly careless ever Nature seems
Of Life or Death, as mortals name them here,
That, in their changes, we may catch the gleams
Of higher life that knows not change or fear,
Enthroned for ever in a nobler sphere !

IN 'MELANCHOLY DAYS.'

SOFTLY the pattering raindrops drip and fall
From sky enswathed in clouds of leaden gray ;
We hear no song of thrush, no liquid call
Of lingering robin,—not a note of all
The chorus of the summer minstrelsy.
The spring's soft rains ne'er hushed their gladsome strains
They sang out loud to greet the early showers ;
Now they are still, while autumn winds blow chill,
And silent frosts despoil the summer flowers.

Yet, sometimes, in the silence, one small bird
Will tune its tiny flute to sudden song,
As if its heart in prophecy were stirred
To catch the distant music, still unheard,
Of spring that comes, though winter tarry long.
Even so, when life glooms dark, our hearts may cling,
In faith and hope, to gladness yet to come,
And, prophet-like, may sing a note of spring ;
'Tis but the deafened heart that can be dumb !

III.

ECHOES OF LIFE AND THOUGHT.

THE MYSTIC SINGER.

I.

HE looked upon the world,—so fair
In spring and morning light ;
He breathed its draughts of incensed air
With passionate delight.

Each blossom in the woodland glade
A rune of beauty seemed ;
The mystery of the hemlock shade
With fairy visions teemed.

The glory of the skies and hills
Into his spirit grew ;
The music of the murmuring rills
In him woke music too.

Deep organ-tones from wind and sea
Blent with the softer strain,
And passion's thrilling ecstasy
Woke joy that verged on pain ;

And shining locks and sparkling eyes
With rapture filled his breast ;
The wine-cup showed him Paradise—
Here surely he was blest !

Here he would win the laurel crown
With joys and honours given ;
In *these* all higher longings drown,
And make of earth his heaven !

II.

But swift arose a withering blast
Where all had seemed so fair ;
The blossoms drooped and faded fast
Before the biting air ;

The glowing skies were swathed in gloom ;
No more the rosy west
Bathed, in an amethystine bloom,
The mountain's rugged crest ;

The birds had hushed their carols gay ;
The gray and leaden hours
Had lost the beauty of the May,
The fragrance of the flowers ;

And sorrow stilled the joyous tone
That thrilled his carol clear :
The music of the world was gone,
Or silent to his ear.

The flowing cup was bitterness,
The golden tresses dim ;
They could not cheer the storm and stress
That had surrounded him !

Black waves of misery and sin
About his being crept ;
He felt them numb his soul within ;
He looked without, and wept.

No hope or comfort could he find
In earth or sky or air ;
All nature seemed to him to be
But sorrow and despair !

III.

Yet while in dark and hopeless mood
He sat alone and wept,
An angel close beside him stood ;
She touched him, and he slept.

And, while he slept, a wondrous light
Made all the darkness shine ;
He saw a Form divinely bright ;
He heard a voice Divine :—

‘ Grieve not for brightness that must change,
For beauty that must go ;
Grieve not for mysteries sad and strange,
Which here thou mayst not know !

‘ Trust Me, that yet behind it all—
All change and pain above—
I am the Power that cannot fall ;
I AM—Eternal Love !

‘ I only through the darkness see
The light serene and clear ;
I only pierce the mystery
That wraps all being here ;

‘ Yet, with Me ever by thy side,
My spirit in thy breast,
Thou, too, mayst through the darkness guide
To light and heaven and rest !’

IV.

A wondrous peace, a blissful calm,
Falls on his heart like dew ;
He wakes to breathe an air of balm
That made an old world new.

The beauty of the morning skies
Is all about him still,
But gone the earthly paradise
That ne’er his heart could fill !

He turns his back on earthly pride,
On earthly pomp and show ;
Before him nobler visions glide
Than earth-bound eyes can know.

He takes his lyre, divinely given ;
He tunes the jarring strings,
And sets them to the songs of heaven,
Still listening while he sings !

Then, through the melody so clear
Rings a new note of joy,
Whose gladness charms the careless ear
Even of the laughing boy !

Upon the maiden's heart it breaks,
That music from above,
And sweeter, deeper chords awake
Than those of earthly love ;

That yet by this are purified
From earthly soil and stain,
And love, that thus to earth hath died,
Eternal lives again !

Upon the world-worn heart at last
The heavenly vision falls,
And from the dim, forgotten past
Sweet memory recalls

The simple faith of childhood's years,
The music that *they* knew,
And, through the mist of child-like tears,
The child-heart waketh too !

Upon the soul with sin oppressed
It breathes its sweetest strain ;
Hope wakes within the hopeless breast,
Love wakes its love again !

v.

And when beside the new-made grave
The bitter tears fall fast,
And sense, that sees but what it gave,
Clings only to the past,—

Faith, through the music clear and strong,
Breathes hope and joy and calm ;
The echoes of the angels' song
Fill Love's triumphal psalm !

UNTRODDEN WAYS ; OR, TWO VISIONS.

WHERE close the curving mountains drew
To clasp the stream in their embrace,
With every outline, shade and hue
Reflected in its placid face,

The ploughman stops his team to watch
The train, as swift it thunders by ;
Some distant glimpse of life to catch,
He strains his eager, wistful eye.

His waiting horses patient stand
With wonder in their gentle eyes,
As through the tranquil mountain land
The snorting engine onward flies.

The morning freshness is on him,
Just wakened from his balmy dreams ;
The wayfarers, all soiled and dim,
Think longingly of mountain streams.

Oh for the joyous mountain air,
The long, delightful autumn day
Among the hills !—the ploughman there
Must have perpetual holiday !

And he, as all day long he guides
His steady plough with patient hand,
Thinks of the train that onward glides
Into some new enchanted land,

Where, day by day, no plodding round
Wearies the frame and dulls the mind,
Where life thrills keen to sight and sound,
With ploughs and furrows left behind !

Even so, to each, the untrod ways
Of life are touched by Fancy's glow,
That ever sheds its brightest rays
Upon the paths we do not know !

LOVE AND PRIDE.

HE spoke in low and earnest tone ;
He pled his long and faithful love ;
He asked a token of her own,
If but the gift of one small glove.
She pointed to the cruel wars
That raged through a distracted land ;
She bade him win his knightly spurs,
And then return to seek her hand.

He listened, bowed a mute assent ;
All silently he left her side,
And to the foremost ranks he went,
Where Death was reaping far and wide ;
And then she knew no craven fears
Had kept him from the battle-plain.
The lady's eyes grew dim with tears :
She could not call him back again !

And daily prayed she in her bower,
And nightly lay awake and wept,
Till came at length the fatal hour
When 'neath the victor's bays he slept.

They bore him to his father's halls,
With sorrow on each rugged face ;
They laid him 'neath the ancient walls,
Last scion of a noble race !

They sought to dry the lady's tears ;
They brought her horse, her lute,—in vain ;
New lovers came, as passed the years—
The lady never smiled again.
'I sent away my love,' she said ;
'My dearest joy to pride I gave.
He lies among the noble dead ;
My heart lies sleeping in his grave !'

SCHILLER'S DYING VISION.

(Suggested by his dying words, 'Many things are growing clearer,'
and his poem 'The Gods of Greece.')

As the fuller light draws nearer,
Streaming from the farther shore,
Many things are growing clearer
That I dimly guessed before ;
For, methinks, those legends olden
Veiled a truth beyond their ken,
Telling us of ages golden
When immortals walked with men.

Thus, in symbol and in shadow,
Light through darkness dimly broke ;
Poesy illumed the meadow,
And the woodland's music woke ;
So the spirits, softly sighing
Through the forest, in the stream,
On the wind's swift pinions flying,
Were not all an idle dream !

Now I see how faith immortal
Oft hath worn a fable's guise,
While she lingered at the portal
Of unfathomed mysteries ;

How the vague, half-conscious dreamings
Of earth's eager, artless youth
Shine with iridescent gleamings
From the inmost heart of Truth ;—

How the old Hellenic vision
Read the soul in Nature's face,
And the gods of her tradition
Made our world their dwelling-place ;—
High enthroned on hoary mountains,
Walking earth in form divine ;
In the spray of silvery fountains
Naiads' gleaming tresses shine ;—

Dryads in the forest shadow
Haunt the woods at eve and dawn,
While the fairies on the meadow
Dance a measure with the faun !
Radiant forms to earth descending
In the moonlight and the dew,
Earthly grace with heavenly blending,
Shine before the poet's view.

Now I see the truth that dwelleth
In these faint and broken gleams
Of the glory that excelleth
Noblest poet's fairest dreams ;
For, with eyes no longer holden,
We may know the Presence bright,
In the sunset's radiance golden,
In the dawn's pale, rosy light ;

In the beauty round us glowing,
And in Nature's changeless course,
We may trace, with inward knowing,
Her eternal spring and source ;
And,—far more,—the deathless story
Through the ages we may read,
How infinite Love and glory
Bent itself to human need.

Now the asphodel for ever
Fades before the amaranth bright ;
Light hath touched the Stygian river,
Dawn, the Acherontian night ;—
For we hear a voice supernal
Tell us—Pluto's reign is o'er,
And the rays of love eternal
Light our life for evermore !

Truth and love and faith and duty
Mould the upward-striving soul,
Still evolving higher beauty
As the ages onward roll ;
Till the light of consecration
Shine upon earth's rudest clod,
And love's fullest Incarnation—
God in man—draw man to God !

THE ANGELS' VISIT.

Two angels of the heavenly choir
That sang the Lord Christ's birth
Came back from wanderings wide and far
To look once more on earth.

Since in their circuit of the spheres
Long centuries had fled,
They fain would see how, with the years,
The great Evangel sped !

They saw great cities thronged with spires
That tapered to the sky ;
They heard the music of their choirs
In praise of God most high ;—

But 'neath their walls stalked spectres grim,
Want, Vice, and dull Despair ;—
Disease crouched in the shadows dim
And filled the tainted air ;—

Man wrestled with his fellow-man
For gold in crowded mart,
And they whose glance the soul could scan
Saw many a murderer's heart !

They saw the alleys foul and dark
Where men like cattle grew ;—
They saw the corpses cold and stark
Of those whom Famine slew ;—

They heard the groans of men—the sighs
Of women tasked like slaves ;
They saw the pestilence arise
To fill a million graves ;

Then saw they palaces of pride
Reared on such toil and pain,
And Tullias, in their chariots, ride
Remorseless o'er the slain ;—

They heard the distant battle-cry
From fields with carnage red—
Each angel breathed a bitter sigh,
And veiled his radiant head !

‘ “ Peace and goodwill ”—we sang,’ they said ;
‘ Long centuries ago ;
Still Strife and Hatred reign instead,
And Love to heaven hath flown !’

A voice came wafted from the blue
On wind that breathed of spring ;
Once more the Christmas choir breaks through
Once more the angels sing.

‘ Peace and goodwill ’—their endless song,
Though strong the power of ill ;
But, though its triumph tarry long,
God's love is stronger still !

Its silent force is stretching far,
And,—though the darkness stay,—
Still glimmers, in the east, the star
That heralds in the day !

Still breathes through strife the note of peace ;
Still Christ anew is born ;
The angels' song shall never cease
That waked the Christmas morn !

And Love in silence still shall grow,
And right shall conquer wrong,
Till earth no jarring chord shall know
To mar the Christmas song !

IN A STUDIO.

You smile to see the canvas bear
The golden sunshine of September,
And trace, in all its outlines fair,
The landscape we so well remember.

You mark the sky, so softly blue ;
The dreamy haze, so golden mellow ;
The woods, in greens of tenderest hue,
Just turning, here and there, to yellow ;

The solemn pines above the stream
Where yon gray mountain rears its shoulder,
And, by the shore, the scarlet gleam
Beside the lichened granite boulder.

You whisper, with a proud delight,
That this reflection of September
Might cheer us on the wintriest night
Amid the snows of dull December !

Ah, well ! you kindly praise the whole ;
You cannot see the figure in it
That graved upon the artist's soul
The sunshine of that golden minute !

You cannot see the earnest eyes
That grew so dreamy and so tender,
While watching, with a glad surprise,
The autumn landscape's golden splendour.

You cannot see the soul-lit face
That made the landscape's central sweetness,
Adding to Nature's ripest grace
The crowning charm of glad completeness !

Well, love, that charm is left me still,
Though vanished is the bright September ;
Though leaves lie strewn and winds blow chill,
You make my sunshine in December !

THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.

THROUGH all our changing lives she flits before us,
The subtle power that stirs each raptured sense :
Now in the sunshine softly brooding o'er us ;
Now in the storm-cloud's dark omnipotence ;

On the young leaflets in the sunshine glancing,
Nestling in dewy cups of soft-hued flowers ;
On moonlit waves of fretted silver dancing
Round beetling crags and ivy-mantled towers.

Through the bright garden, through the dreamy wild wood,
Still does she lure our longing, wondering sight,
The while we fancy, with the faith of childhood,
That, somehow, we can stay her in her flight !

In rainbow tints we see her garments streaming,
Wave through the forest aisles her locks of light,
And in the sunset's gold and purple gleaming
We seem to look upon her palace bright,

Where streamlets wander on by copse and meadow,—
With marge of daisied turf and swaying reeds,
Where bends the birchen bough to kiss its shadow—
Still do we follow—still she onward leads !

Where, in dark forest pools, the snowy chalice
'Mid floating leaves shines, saint-like, through the gloom,
Or where the lily-queens, in garden palace,
Keep royal state of beauty and perfume ;

Where mountain summits rise, snow-capped and hoary,
Or fade afar in soft ethereal blue,
Or wear, at eve, an amethystine glory,
The spirit flits and lures *us* onward, too !

She seems to sit upon the torrent foaming
Into the mystery of the dim ravine ;
To smile from tiniest flowers that greet our roaming,
Like stars that gleam from clouds of living green ;—

She flits o'er purple wastes of ocean, flowing
Round isles of silver sand and towering palm,
Where fadeless summer, 'mid her blossoms glowing
Breathes o'er the orange groves and hills of balm.

In vain we look and long ; we rise and follow
O'er rock and moorland, river, lake and hill ;
Not eagle's mighty wing nor flight of swallow
O'ertakes a swifter, more elusive still !

For not in earthly resting-place she dwelleth ;
No outward form can keep that essence rare ;
The soul we seek, the ' Beauty that excelleth,'
Foldeth her wings in more ethereal air.

The richest, purest gem can only grasp her
In pulsing throbs—her home is not of earth ;
But for a moment can our senses clasp her—
Her essence is of that which gave them birth.

Only in heart and soul can we enshrine her ;
Their kin is she, though nobler far than they.
We catch but glimpses of a form diviner,
Immortal Beauty—set in endless day !

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

PRESS on ! press on ! in all the strength of love
And faith and hope, nor let thy courage fail ;
The pure sweet light and air are just above,
Beyond this sulphurous vale.

Clasp her more closely ;—bear the unconscious form
Through the hot simoon and the blinding storm ;
Let nought avail to make thee swerve or stay,
Till thou hast reached at last the realm of day !

Full well, full well thy prayers and tears have wrought ;
Haste onward with thy face set toward the light,
With her whom thy great love in darkness sought,
And found her, in the night !
But look not back into that frightful tomb
Where grinning spectres chase thee through the gloom ;
Not even to see the face thou lovest best
Let thine eye swerve ;—*above* are light and rest.

Press on ! Press on ! the powers of Death are strong,
And strong the hold they fasten on their prey ;
Nought but thy deathless love, thy heavenly song,
Could win her for the day ;
Yet keep thy face straight set unto the light,
Turn not thy glance back on the swallowing night ;
Walk strong in faith, —before are light and rest ;
There thou shalt see the face thou lovest best !

REALITY.

‘ It is by love, only, that one keeps hold upon reality.’

AMIEL.

THE rosy glow of the sunset’s glory
On bounding hills, or their purple hue,
Is not in the mountains grim and hoary,
Nor dwells in the heaven its depth of blue.
These lovely tints, have they no real being,
The beauty of mountain and wave and tree ?
Are they only born in the act of seeing ?
And what—oh, what !—are the *things we see* ?
Our minds, we know, are each moment taking
Impressions firm as if carved in stone ;
Yet Fancy hovers about them, waking
New shapes and forms and scenes unknown.

'Tis but reviving and recombining
Old thoughts and images—empty air—
Memory and fancy together twining,
But what—oh, what !—awakes them there?

We walk in the midst of a maze of wonder,
Beauty and mystery on either hand ;
We pass, though a gulf still yawns to sunder,
From the world of sense to the spiritland !
We see, we hear—it is all our knowing—
The forms and sounds that will not stay,
But we know not what, beneath their showing,
Beneath their changing, endures for aye.

In vain we question, we idly wonder,
We may not o'erpass the mortal bound
That hems us in while we darkly wander
In a shadowy region of sight and sound,
Sure alone that the forms that hover
Vaguely before us with gleaming wings,
Still to our souls some truth discover
Out of the innermost heart of things :—

That beneath all glamour and all illusion,
All changing colour and fleeting tone,
There lies the real that is no delusion,
The truth we may grasp from the dark unknown ;—
That every vision, so faintly stealing
Into the brain by the way of sense,
Brings to our souls some true revealing
Of the hidden heart of Omnipotence !

Yet, nearer, closer than nerves or senses,
Sweeter by far than the thought of will—
Stronger than linking of evidences—
Is the voice within us, so small and still—
That tells us what we are vainly seeking
By outward wisdom—all thought above—
The essence of life, to our hearts low speaking,
We know by the dearer name of LOVE !

THE BATTLE OF THE HUNS.*

THERE comes through mists of ages
A tale of one dark day,
When by the yellow Tiber
The massed barbarians lay.

The savage hordes of Attila
Had swept the land like flame,
And Rome, in royal purple,
Quaked at the conqueror's name.

Yet, issuing from her portals
In flashing panoply,
Her best and bravest warriors
Went forth to fight and die.

Then, when the sunset glory
Faded from tower and dome,
There was woe and bitter wailing
Within the walls of Rome ;

For the purple shades of evening,
That hid the bloody field,
Veiled thousands, sleeping silent
'Neath battered helm and shield.

Close by the pale, proud Roman
Slept the fair, bearded Hun ;
The lances lay unheeded—
The cohort's work was done !

* There is in the gallery at Berlin a world-renowned picture by Kaulbach, suggested by the legend which forms the subject of these verses. Through the shadowy gloom of night that has gathered over the silent battle-field, strewn with corpses, are dimly discerned the spectral figures of the combatants, whose spirits are fabled to have renewed the deadly combat above their lifeless bodies, and carried it on without intermission for three days and nights.

Yet some said, with clear vision
That pierced the mystic screen
Which ever parteth from us
The spirit-world unseen,—

That o'er the stiffened corpses,
O'er the cold, silent dead,
A fierce and deadly battle
Was raging overhead ;

The shades of the departed
Crowded the dusky air,
In quenchless hatred fighting
A second combat there !

And days and nights that followed
No truce or respite brought,
Where, o'er the clay-cold sleepers,
The shadowy warriors fought.

So runs the weird, old legend
Of warlike days of old,
Which veils a deeper meaning,
Methinks, beneath its fold :

That life's far-reaching issues
Know not the bound of death ;
The strife 'twixt good and evil
Ends not with mortal breath ;—

That long eternal ages
Shall carry on the fight
We wage in life's stern conflict
For God and for the right !

IN THE ELIZABETHAN GARDEN AT
HEIDELBERG.*

How soft the summer sunshine plays
About the grand old palace walls,
Where, from the billowy woodland maze,
The ruddy castle towers upraise
Their ruined state, while Neckar crawls
Past the long town, in wandering ways !

And there, beneath the mouldering towers,
An ancient royal garden lay,
Whose fair and fragrant old-world flowers
In alleys green, 'neath arching bowers,
Might woo a princess fair as they
To while away the summer hours.

Methinks thine eyes, of self-same race,
Are fair as hers of English blue
Who strolled in this enchanted place
In jewelled sheen and high-born grace,
While coming woes she little knew
Were gathering round her life apace.

Beauty and love have passed away ;
Her stately tomb is elsewhere ;
Yet still a rose-bush fresh and gay
Blooms out amid the ruins gray,
And drops a rosebud on thy hair,
Fair maiden of a later day !

* The Elizabethan garden at Heidelberg Castle, now shaded by tall trees, was made on the ramparts with great labour and expense for the beautiful and unfortunate young Electress, Elizabeth, daughter of James I., when she came as a bride to the palatinate. The story of the ruin that overtook the fortunes of this princess and her husband, after his fatal acceptance of the Bohemian crown, is well known to readers of history. Her tomb is in Westminster Abbey, near that of Mary Queen of Scots, and of other unhappy princesses of the Stuart race.

So—winsome maiden fair to see,
When thou and life have shaken hands,
Some nobler tribute meant for thee,
Some blossom from thy beauty's tree,
To other maids in other lands
An added grace and joy may be !

Yet shalt thou, dear one, have a care
Such blossoms keep the rose's sweetness ;
If thou art good as thou art fair,
For thee, soul-gardens cannot bear
Save what in beauty and in meetness
Shall fit into thine evening prayer !

IN AFGHANISTAN.

IN THE PEIWAR PASS.*

ONLY an Afghan soldier,
A man without a name ;
In the ranks of the British army,
To the Peiwar Pass he came.
Fate's perverse chance had led him
In alien ranks to stand,
And now they were marching onward
To waste his native land.

Can he march 'neath the hostile colours
Through the hills he loved so well,
With fire and sword for his childhood's home,
And give no sign to tell ?

* During the Afghan War the telegraphic despatches informed us that an Afghan soldier had been hanged for firing his rifle to warn his countrymen of the British advance on the Peiwar Pass. The man ascended the platform, uttering only the remark that he should have preferred to be hung in his own country. Lord Roberts says of such cases, 'It was with extreme regret that I confirmed these sentences.'

Though the alien flag waved o'er him,
 And its livery he wore,
 He was still an Afghan warrior,
 And an Afghan heart he bore.

So he fired his English rifle,
 And its crack rang far and wide,
 And only the echoing mountains
 And the frowning pass replied.

But they hanged him there for a traitor,
 And he uttered nor plaint nor sigh,
 Save only this, that he fain had stood
 On his native soil to die.

And bright through the doom of the felon
 Shines out the patriot's glory ;
 Since we know that '*dulce decorum*
Est pro patriâ mori !'

THE PRINCE AND HIS BRIDE.

FROM frost-bound realms of ice and snow
 O Prince, bring home thy bride,
 Returning towards the sunset glow
 From Neva's frozen tide ;
 Sweet English snowdrops, pale and fair,
 Shall rear their drooping heads—
 Meet bridal offerings, scattered where
 The northern princess treads.

Not as of old with battle-cry,
 And cannon's thundering peal,
 And blood-stained swords uplifted high,
 And flash of fire and steel ;
 But at the altar's peaceful bounds
 Briton and Russian meet,
 'Mid solemn vows and sacred sounds,
 And blessings pure and sweet !

We bless the mystic power of love,
We bless the spousal ring,
As goodly gifts from God above,
Whence countless blessings spring.
May Love expand his holy strength
Till war and hatred cease,
And the round world is bound at length
In one bright ring of peace !

All precious things of heaven and earth,
O Prince—be hers and thine,
But most the gift of highest birth,
The gift of love divine ;
The sweetness of an English spring
That waits your home-bound feet
Be presage of life blossoming
Before you fair and sweet.

Unwithered by the glare of State
May your home-blessings be
The same that humbler brides await,
As gladsome and as free ;
And chiefly blessed by Cana's guest,
Yours be the purpose high
That links this changing life below
With God's eternity !

THE STORMING OF THE ICE PALACE:
A PARABLE. (JANUARY, 1885.)

MONTREAL.

BENEATH the clear Canadian winter night,
What holds our spell-bound gaze ?
A wondrous castle filled with lambent light
From battlement to base ;
And round about its glittering crystal halls,
In martial pomp arrayed,
Torch-bearing thousands stand, and storm the walls
With mimic cannonade.

Fast flash the hissing rockets to the sky—
Fast fall the harmless showers
Of coloured stars, while mimic serpents fly
About the crystal towers ;
But see that lurid radiance wake and grow
To bathe the turret high ;—
The castle seems to burn with fiery glow
Against the moonlit sky !

'Mid clouds of smoke and glare of crimson light,
We think it shakes and falls,
When, lo ! they pass, and clear against the night
Still rise the pearly walls ;
Still its pure radiance gleams undimmed and fair ;
Still do its lustrous towers
Seem fitting shrine for Balder sleeping there
Till Spring awake the flowers !

KHARTOUM.* .

It was a parable we smiled to see ;
To-day we read it true,
In shock of hell 'gainst faith and purity !
But little then we knew
That, far away where Nile's mysterious flood
Winds through his storied lands,
Khartoum had fallen ; England's noblest blood
Had drenched the desert sands.

The Christian knight, most dear to Britain's heart,
As faith outweigheth gold,
Had fallen, done to death by traitor art,
As Balder died, of old ;

* During the last fatal days of the siege of Khartoum a brilliant winter carnival was being held in Montreal. The tragic ending of the siege and death of Gordon was very nearly contemporaneous with the storming of the Ice Palace above described. The conquering campaign of Lord Kitchener and the succeeding events have already verified the prediction of the last stanza.

And clouds of lurid smoke and streams of gore
Met the sad tear-dimmed sight
Of those who looked to see the wrong of yore
Fall, conquered by the right !

But patience ! for we know God's great designs
Are wrought not in a day ;—
Through clouds and darkness, still His purpose shines,
And still shall shine for aye ;
And through long ages owning bright and clear
The brotherhood of man,—
Humanity shall hold the memory dear
Of Gordon of Soudan !

GARFIELD'S FUNERAL DAY.

God's will be done—alas ! we know not why,
In spite of longing love and tender care,
And a great nation's mighty voice of prayer,
The foul blow triumphs, and the good must die !—

Yet, in this time of heavy loss and pain
All party cries are hushed in one great grief,
And bowed, in mourning o'er its fallen chief ;—
The land divided, breathes as one again.

Nor north nor south it knows, nor east nor west :
Its mighty heart throbs with a single beat,
While fall its tears upon the winding-sheet
That wraps to-day its noblest and its best.

Nor north nor south !—*all* boundaries are fled
Where noble manhood falls for truth's dear sake ;
We know no frontier line on land or lake—
A continent is mourning for the dead !

And far across the sea that rolls between
Old England and the New, the grief is shared ;
Both nations bow their heads, in sorrow bared,
And with the mourners weepeth England's Queen !

From Biscay's Bay to Tiber's yellow wave,
Wherever freemen's hearts beat true to-day,
Unseen, they join the long and sad array
That bears the martyred ruler to his grave !

Yet, still, perhaps, his high heroic soul
May guide the people's destinies,—his trust,—
And from the treasure of his sacred dust
His voice still urge them to the nobler goal ;

And from the sorrow, since it must befall,
May seeds of blessing for the nations grow ;—
A closer human brotherhood below,
More love and service to the Lord of all !

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

'Peace is, as ever, the greatest of British interests. Above all, peace with America is not only an interest, but a first condition of honourable life with both peoples.' (*London Chronicle*.)

'Together England and America may enwrap the world with liberty and fill it with peace.' (Dr. Lyman Abbott.)

'The British Foreign Minister has received a note from Mr. Bayard, U.S. Ambassador, saying that he has been instructed by his Government to tender thanks to Great Britain for her kind offices to Americans in the Transvaal.' (*Telegraphic Despatch*.)

THEY had a difference once, in days of old—
Mother and daughter—for the daughter's heart
Was hot with fire of youth, and rash and bold,
The mother's—proud and obstinate and cold,
And so, in sullen gloom, they moved apart !

The long years passed, and changes came to each,
Touching them with a subtle, altering power,
And both were wiser grown in thought and speech,
And kindly words and deeds that ancient breach
Helped Time to close, with every passing hour.

Then came a burst of sudden wrath that flamed
O'er the new amity the years had wrought,
And angry thoughts found voice, and rash souls blamed,
And dreamed of such strange conflict as had shamed
The bond of kindred each awhile forgot !

Then speeds the word that, in the heart of foes,
Some dear to both in deadly peril stand,
And heart to heart in swift outreaching goes,
And wide her arms the generous mother throws
Round all her children in that alien land.

But hark ! what sad, heart-rending cry we hear
From those fair plains that cradled once our faith,
Where walked of old the patriarch and seer,
Now loosed from hell are all the fiends of fear,
And o'er the land there rolls a tide of death !

Mother and daughter, hear that piteous prayer !
In this your noblest bond of union be,
To save the victim from the cruel snare,
To lift the load of terror and despair,
And free the captive from captivity !

So speak the kindred blood, and from the soul
Of two great nations swell one noble chord
Of diverse tones that yet harmonious roll,
In diapason full of one grand whole,
Responsive to the impulse of their Lord !

TO THE HEIGHTS.

'Sic itur ad astra.'

As fair to the eyes of the prophet
The desert pathway through
Were the distant shadowy mountains,
So dreamy and soft and blue,

Although on their sunlit summits
His feet might never stand,
And, but from the Mount of Vision,
He might view the Promised Land !

So, fair to the inner vision,
As on through life we go,
Loom the shadowy hills of promise
Soft in the morning glow.

How long is the way to reach them,
But little we heed or care ;
How hard and steep the climbing
To the summits that seem so fair !

Yet still they recede before us,
And ever their promise sweet,
Like a spell they have woven o'er us,
Lures on our wandering feet ;

And although we may reach them never,
Till the cold death-stream is passed,
For us they shall keep their promise,
And the heights shall be ours at last !

A CHRISTMAS RIME.

WHAT may a poet find to praise,
Or what the soul and heart to cheer,
What time the dark December days
Are whitening towards the closing year,

When all the silent woods are bare,
And all the streams lie still and dead,
And from the bleak and biting air
Each woodland hermit hides his head ;

When for the song of birds and brooks,
For summer morn and sunset glow,
A wilderness of men and books
Piles up the tide of human woe,

And sages tell us that, behind
The song of birds, the opening flower,
Lies some—we may not call it mind—
But only blank and formless power,

And still look down the unchanging stars
On bitter feud and deadly fray ;
On clash of arms and dungeon bars,
And hate that seems to live away ?

* * * * *

Nay, on the branches brown and bare
The buds grow, waiting for the spring,
With sunshine sweet and balmy air
To wake them into blossoming !

And o'er the bleak expanse of snow
What silvery music softly swells ?
Its deep-voiced gladness well we know—
Once more ring out the Christmas bells.

They tell the tale so sweet and old :
Too oft it cannot greet our ears ;
Not mindless Power, but Love untold
Controls the atoms and the spheres ;—

Love that can stoop to low estate,
Or rise aloft in angel song ;
Divine, wise Love, not hard, blind Fate,
And strong as Love alone is strong,—

Love that, like life, enwraps us round,
Smiles on us here from human eyes ;
Yet lifts our souls from earthly bound
To breathe the air of paradise.

And in that mystic point afar,
Towards which a myriad suns are led,
We see in parable the Star
That shone above the manger-bed.

The wisdom of the East and West
Must humbly seek that lowly shrine,
And find the object of their quest
In worship of the Love Divine !

‘THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD.’

SWEET is the rustling of the young spring leaves,
And the glad song of birds beneath the eaves ;—
Sweet the soft patter of the April rain,
And the bright sunshine bursting forth again ;
Fair is the streamlet trickling through the wood,
And the spring blossoms born in solitude ;
But sweeter still, and purer joy impart
Blossoms of love upspringing from the heart !

Sweet is the balmy air of summer morn,
When fragrant gales amid the flowers are born ;
Rare is the breath of early opening rose,
Or waxen lily petals that uncloze
Their alabaster vases of perfume
Amid a thousand wandering wafts of bloom ;
Yet rarer still the incense that uprolls
When Love’s warm breezes quicken human souls !

Sweet is the peace that falls at eventide,
When—the day’s glow and glory cast aside—
More tender tints and shadows wake to birth,
A restful hush falls on the tranquil earth,
Unbroken save by vespers of the wood,
Or bird’s low carol to her listening brood ;
Yet sweeter peace falls on the human breast
When God’s own curfew calls it home to rest !

SALVE, JUVENIS !

‘Et in Arcadia ego.’

WELCOME, young brother, into that fair land
Which hath the home of all true poets been,
Wherein the sunny glades are ever green,
And sparkling streams flow soft o’er silver sand
Their flowery banks between ;

Whereon a softer, purer radiance shines
Than golden sunshine, or than moonlight clear ;
Nor change nor winter knows the tranquil year,
Because perennial summer there enshrines
The spirit of the seer !

And though ’mid dry and dusty paths of life
The weary feet may for a season stray,
Still see thou keep an ever open way
Into that refuge calm from worldly strife
And passion’s restless play !

Yet, oh, remember ! through that land there lies—
And straight its course from that more happy shore—
A path that still ascends for evermore,
From height to height, to heaven’s eternal skies,
Revealed to hearts that soar

Above the changeful lights of time and earth,
Which ne’er our longing hearts can satisfy ;
Follow the light that cannot fade or fly,
From whence our spirits draw their nobler birth—
That life which cannot die !

And thus the blessed power perchance may be
Bestowed on thee to catch some passing ray
Of that pure light, to cheer the darkened way
Of hearts that droop in-darkness, nor can see
The light of endless day !

THE PILGRIMS IN THE DESERT.

It chanced that, resting from this world's turmoil,
I had a dream as the gray morning broke
That roused from Sabbath rest to weekday toil ;
But if it came to one who slept or woke,
Or if a secret meaning through it spoke,
I cannot tell,—perchance it was a gleam
Of truth, too often hid 'neath things that seem,
Which, thickly growing in the world's rank soil,
Crowd out the real. And thus befell the dream :

I saw a dreary desert stretch afar ;—
The keenest sight could find no line or bound,
Save where the pale horizon set its bar
Across the straining vision,—all around
There lay a waste of rough, uneven ground,
And ranges of low hillocks, partly sand
And partly grass, arose on either hand ;
And sometimes 'neath a stunted tree was found
A little shadow in this weary land !

Across the waste a beaten pathway led,
Trodden by many a pilgrim company,
And they, who had explored the region, said
It led at last to a great shoreless sea,
And none can tell how wide those waters be ;
Only this much,—that none, who once set sail
On their dark tide, come back to tell the tale
Of what befell, or clear the mystery
That hangs about that distance dim and pale !

But through the waste, where one green margin showed,
Bordered with flowers, begirt with pastures green
And bowery foliage,—a clear streamlet flowed,
Pellucid, sparkling ;—o'er its flow serene
Arched bending boughs, all wet with dewy sheen,
And feathery grasses waved, and lilies white
Opened their snowy bosoms to the light ;
And swaying vines and ferns, a leafy screen,
With their lush green refreshed the aching sight.

And at those living waters, flowing free,
The thirsting pilgrims their parched throats might slake,
Nor thirst again for ever ! And to me,
Watching with eager longing for their sake,
It seemed that all should gladly stop and take
The crystal draught that flowed so sweet and clear !
(And there were some among them I held dear,
And even with tears besought them to partake
Ere they pressed on their journey long and drear).

And as the train of seekers onward swept,
Scarce glancing towards me as they passed me by,
I sat upon the ground and sadly wept
For those who thirsted so, but would not try
The living waters gushing freshly nigh !
I saw them faint, exhausted ;—saw them sink,
Weakened by thirst, so near the streamlet's brink ;
But vain were pleading voice and warning cry
To those who, thirsting, said, ' We *will* not drink !'

For most passed careless o'er the beaten track,
Scorning the streamlet's music in their ear ;
In vain I sought to call and win them back,
Nor could persuade even those I held most dear
And knew were weary unto death ! Yet tear
And prayer were all in vain their steps to stay ;
For they were gazing where a mirage lay
Of palaces and towers that glimmered near,
And lured them o'er the desert waste to stray !

And as they onward pressed, with lagging feet,
They dreamed a dream of paradisal bowers,
And days that pass in languor soft and sweet,
'Mid plashing fountains, feasts, and fadeless flowers !
Yet, ever as they go, the leaden hours
Lag slower, while they thread the desert haze,
And still before the dancing mirage plays,
Until at last the journey is complete,
And the dark, shoreless water fronts their gaze !

But I beheld where, by the streamlet, grew
A lily-cup of pure and stainless white,
Which in its bosom held, like drops of dew,
Some of that living water, pure and bright,
And this I seized and gathered with delight,
And put to parchèd lips the precious draught ;
And some took gratefully the flower and quaffed,
Others scarce looked, and turned in cold disdain,
And some passed scoffing by, and loudly laughed.

Yet, still I filled and filled the lily-cup,
And carried it to many a thirsting soul,
And some would smile and take my goblet up,
Admire its graceful mould, its stainless bowl,
And then would taste, and thank me for the dole,
But scorn my guidance to the streamlet's brink,
Where they could ever of its fulness drink,
And walk, refreshed, to seek a fairer goal
Than those false gleams that into nothing sink !

But some there were, though few, who followed me
To find the fountain of their waking dreams,
And quenched their thirst, and trod with footstep free,
And pined no more for those delusive gleams,
Walking through pastures green by living streams
That flowed through the dark water's sullen tide,
And bore them safely to the farther side,
Where shines th' Eternal City, fair to see,
And every seeker shall be satisfied !

WAITING YET.

MARGARET, I see thee yet
In the quiet woodland way
Where the sun, about to set,
Crowned thee with a rosy ray.

Dost remember—dearest one—
That October evening rare,
When the hazy, crimson sun
Sank into the purple air?

How the scarlet maple burned
Through the pine-tree's dusky shade.
While the placid stream returned
All the glory that it made?

How the river, sweeping wide,
Wandered toward the glowing west.
Rcsy red its glassy tide,
Shadowy islets on its breast?

Dost remember all the pain,
All the sweetness, all the glow?
How we found that loss was gain,
Parting union, loving so?

Dost remember how, with tears,
Then we sought,—since part we must,—
Strength to meet the lonely years,
The sweet strength of love and trust?

How we looked across the long
Vista of this lower life,
Knowing heaven completes the song
Drowned amid the earthly strife?

How we felt that souls who love,
Though the whole round world divide,
On the Father's heart above
Still together may abide?

Yes, for well I know thy heart
Hath not learned the word 'forget'!
Though our lives were torn apart,
Still, my love, my Margaret,
Thou, I know, art waiting yet!

A PRESAGE.

ONLY a winter day—but the sun lies warm on the snow,
And the air is touched with a softness from the summers
of long ago ;
And the misty light gleams golden through the bare and
leafless trees,
And a dream of summer comes wafted from the far-off
Southern seas !

Only a winter day—but the cattle, as they go,
Drowsily through the sunshine the hidden presage know,
That breathes like a waft of perfume through the soft
and balmy air,
And whispers that Spring is coming, and tells us she is
fair !

Even so, through life's long winter there falleth many a
ray,
Strayed from th' eternal summer to glorify the day ;
And we were duller than cattle if we could not recognise
The Presence of Light that dwelleth beyond our earthly
skies !

ARDENVOHR.

I KNOW a spot where, soft and fair,
The early light is lying,
Where bird-notes, rippling through the air,
Seem each to each replying.

O'ertopped by stately oak and pine,
Begirt with lawn and meadow,
Where on the sward the happy kine
Repose in grateful shadow.

There, through the dappled light and shade,
The stream is softly flowing ;
The lilies in the sunny glade
With golden hearts are glowing.

I catch the odour of the pine,
 Its balmy incense breathing,
 The sweeter fragrance of the vine,
 The trellis closely wreathing !

Where lightly stirs the summer breeze,—
 The billowy foliage swelling,
 Rise far-off spires behind the trees,
 And many a distant dwelling.

A pleasant place it is to pass
 The livelong summer day in ;
 For childhood sporting in the grass,
 Or age to wear away in !

The year must wane to wintry hours,
 And June and we must sever ;
 But in my heart those glades and bowers
 Stay fresh and green for ever !

A MOONLIGHT VISION.

SHADOWY islet and misty water,
 Dusky pine-trees, rugged and tall,
 A pallid moon in her waning quarter
 With a sombre radiance bathing all ;
 The gurgling splash of the waves that never
 Tarry or break in their low, sweet song ;
 A boat that glides o'er the placid river,
 Scarce move its oars as it floats along.

Ah me ! how real the shadowy vision
 That rises out of the vanished years !
 Again we drift in a dream Elysian,
 And the splash of the wavelets soothes our ears.
 I listen once more to your low, sweet singing :—
 Still, though the weary years have flown,
 Through my inmost heart your voice is ringing :
 I know each cadence,—each tender tone !

How we planned our course over life's broad river,
 Flowing bright through our thoughts like that moonlit
 stream,
As though on its tide might float for ever
 The fragile bark of our airy dream !
How we strove to banish the present sorrow
 With smiles that trembled on verge of tears,
And the haunting thought of the coming morrow,
 The first long day of the parted years !
Ah ! well we knew not how time, slow gliding,
 Could cool the love while it dulled the pain ;
Ah well we knew not how space, dividing
 Could sever lives like a parted chain !
Yet, thinkst thou ne'er of that shadowy river,
 That summer eve and its happy dream,
That still through my heart flows on for ever
 With the rhythmic flow of that moonlit stream !

THE LOST PICTURE.

THE silver wavelets of the stream
 Flow softly round the island shore,
And, like the image of a dream,
Two bright wild roses ever seem
From tangle of dark leaves to gleam ;
Where bends the birch to kiss the tide,
And wild vines droop, the rocks beside,
 Their fair, fresh faces, bending o'er,
 Shine from the stream—ah ! nevermore !

I found them, as my boat, one day,
 Was drifting idly past the shore ;
I loved them, smiling on the spray,
I broke the stems, and bore away
The roses, for so fair were they,
They won my heart,—I could not bear
To sail away and leave them there ;
 So, from the crystal stream I tore
 Their image, trembling, from the shore.

Their sweet, fresh beauty faded fast,
Nor could I aught of grace restore ;
That hour of brightness was their last,
Their transient hour of bloom was past,
Their petals to the breeze were cast ;—
Still, from the rock the vine droops low,
The birches kiss the river's flow,
But it gives back, ah ! nevermore
Their image, smiling, from the shore !

A MODERN DRYAD.

WITH soft blue eyes and curls of gold,
And cheeks like a rose leaf fresh unrolled,
Like a very Dryad of story old,
She smiles at me from her bowery hold.
Sunny and bright and fair to see,
Brimming with laughter and bounding glee,
Is my fairy who dwells in the apple-tree !

When soft spring buds in the branches bare
Are kissed into life by the sweet spring air,
And rose-flushed clusters, so bright and rare,
Are bursting forth into promise fair
Of the coming fruit so fair to see,
Fairer still than the flowers is she,—
My fairy who dwells in the apple-tree !

When the sun of June has turned to snow
The tree that was tinged with a rosy glow,
And over each bough that droops so low
Showers of white petals come and go,—
Crowned with the snowy flowers is she,
And she shakes her curls and smiles at me,—
My fairy who dwells in the apple-tree.

When autumn has brought the ripened glow
To the rosy apples with hearts of snow,
My fairy is ready to merrily throw
Her treasures down on the grass below ;

Laughing aloud with joyous glee,
As she slyly throws the largest at me,
My fairy who dwells in the apple-tree !

When winter comes and the tree is bare
Of the last brown leaflet that fluttered there,
And the snowdrifts whirl in the biting air,
I know a nest somewhere—somewhere—
Warmly lined ;—and there shall she—
If she's more than a vision—dwell with me,—
My fairy that haunts the apple-tree !

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

HIS REMINISCENCE.

METHINKS I see it once again—
That sunset of the past,
The flood of slanting golden rays
Athwart the pine-trees cast ;

I hear the murmur of the wave
Upon the pebbly shore,
Soft plashing on the light canoe ;—
I hear your voice once more !

I see the shady, sheltered nook
Where you awhile would stay ;—
The lichened granite crag that rose
Above the quiet bay.

Before me rise the moss-grown rocks
With crests of plummy fern ;
The very fragrance of the pines
Seems almost to return.

I hear again the cat-bird's cry,
The cawing of the rook,
The while you sat and sketched in haste
With grave abstracted look,

Until at length I spoke, resolved
At least my fate to try,
And hushed the beating of my heart
To catch your low reply.

Ah well ! it changed my life for me,
From hope to long regret,
Swiftly as fled the evening glow
When that bright sun had set !

All silently, across the lake,
Our bark retraced its way,
While the rich hues of wave and sky
Were fading into gray.

I rowed,—you steered,—no spoken word
The woodland echoes woke ;
Your white hand dipping from the stern
The quivering wavelets broke.

I did not blame you—well I know
Love may not be compelled ;
I would not take a heart that must
In golden links be held ;

And—well-a-day ! few are the hearts
That grasp their brightest dreams ;—
Some day, perchance, we yet shall know
Why life so futile seems !

Since then, my feet have wandered far
And wide by land and sea ;
And, love ! I trust that life has brought
More joy to you than me.

For nothing—spite some lingering pain—
Can sweeter memories wake
Than this dried blossom from the shore
Of that Canadian lake !

HER REMINISCENCE.

'Tis such a fair June eventide
As one remembered well,
In those old days the sunset rays
With softer radiance fell !

They would not let me stay behind,
Although I vainly pled ;
Nor could I try to tell them—why
The spot so much I dread.

Ah ! how the scene, the woodland scent,
Recalls the vanished grace
Of that past sunset glow, that still
Lives in this haunted place !

Not many words, that eventide,
There passed between us twain ;
Yet such an hour can never more
Come back to me again.

He asked if I could leave my home
With him to cross the sea,
And strangely cold for lover bold
His manner seemed to me !

I knew not then how surface calm
A glowing heart may hide ;
His words seemed weak true love to speak,
Or please my maiden pride !

They called him rich, and I had said
My love should ne'er be sold ;
My heart was numb, my lips seemed dumb,
And words came few and cold.

Scarce can I tell what words were said ;
He bowed a grave assent,
And silently across the bay
With heavy hearts we went.

The lake, as now, lay glassy calm,
 Soft in the evening light ;
 In pain and pride I turned to hide
 The tears that dimmed my sight.

I hoped, in vain, that he would speak
 Again, but one word more ;
 But nought was said, the moment fled ;
 We parted on the shore !

Such things no doubt must always be ;
 Yet still returns again
 The thought—how different life had been
 Had he but spoken *then* !

He bade us all a calm good-bye—
 The while I stood apart,—
 With eyes averted, pressed my hand,
 Nor saw the vain tears start.

No doubt he has forgotten long
 The love he uttered then ;
 But here that hour resumes its power
 And breathes for me again !

* * * *

But there comes little Alice,
 And someone by her side,
 Whose words I know have waked the blush
 She vainly tries to hide.

No more of dreaming now for me ;
 Such fancies all are past ;
 Yet I would pray that many a day
Her happy dream may last.

And yet, perchance, the love that here
 Its fuller growth may miss
 Shall find new spring and blossoming
 In happier clime than this !

LEFT BEHIND.

THE sun rode down the glowing west,
 Turning to wine the stream below ;
 The woods in green and gold were dressed ;
 The parting sun was loth to go !

And, ere he went, he pondered long
 The witching beauty of the scene :
 How sweet the robin's evensong,
 How fair the woods, in living green !

Yet ceased the robin's song full soon,
 The rose-flushed stream grew dull and gray ;
 And, dark beneath the rising moon,
 All colourless the greenwood lay.

The sun rode on and never knew
 The short-lived loveliness was gone ;
 He mourned the bright enchanting view—
It could not live—his smile withdrawn !

Without him, all the brightness fled,
 For he it was who made it fair ;
 Love's light removed, all Nature—dead,
 Must sink to chaos and despair !

THE ROYAL FUNERAL.

JANUARY, 1891.

'The Princess of Wales remained looking mournfully at the coffin of her beloved son for some time after the service was ended.'

SADLY the old flag droops its crimson folds
 O'er all the lands that own our Empire's sway ;
 Millions of hearts one common sorrow holds
 About the bier they carry forth to-day !

Death claims a nation's hope—an Empire's heir,
The firstborn son—a loving mother's pride,
An aged Queen's young bud of promise fair,
The cherished darling of his promised bride !

Slowly the sad procession winds its way
Through sorrowing crowds to England's royal
tomb ;
All the bright visions of the bridal day
Are quenched in darkness and a nation's gloom.

O death and sorrow ! conquerors of kings !
Nought that is earthly can resist your sway ;
Yet, through the gloom, one balm your presence
brings,—
The tender touch of human sympathy !

The mother weeping o'er her firstborn's bier,
The maiden's tears that o'er her lover fall,
The grief of age that mourns a child so dear
Are one in cottage and in royal hall !

From east to west, wherever true hearts beat
Through the wide realm that knows no set of sun ;
About that flag-draped bier to-day they meet,
And multitudes of pulses throb as one !

O wondrous bond of sympathy divine,
Linking our hearts with unseen powers above—
We hail you, 'mid our sorrow, as the sign
That Death itself can never conquer Love !

THE SILENT HOUR.

WHEN the twilight's brooding shadow
Spreads o'er hill and stream and meadow,
Comes a season set apart ;
From the din of earthly noises,
From the hum of human voices,
Hushed and still, the shadowy twilight
Soothes the hot and restless heart !

For the quiet stays the aching
Earth's unrest is ever waking,
 With its myriad ills and wrongs ;
For the silent hour enchanted
Seems by murmurous music haunted,—
Floating through the shadowy twilight,
 Echoes faint of spirit-songs.

And they whisper, Not for ever
Are the fretting and the fever,
 Nor eternal, wrong and sin ;
And behind the turmoil fleeting
One grand rhythmic measure beating
Pulses through the shadowy twilight
 When we let God's music in !

AN ADVENT HYMN.

THE Christmas stars shine clear and bright
As on the first glad Christmas night ;
But where the gleams of angel wings ?
Where the celestial choir that sings
A carol to the listening earth,
Glad tidings of that heavenly birth
With which a thousand anthems ring ?
And where is *He*—the Heavenly King ?

He cometh still in light of day,
O'er purple hilltops far away ;
No sudden flash of dazzling light
Darts through the shadows of the night ;—
But even while our waiting eyes
Are watching for the glad surprise,
We find that, ere we knew, the day
Clear on the hills and valleys lay.

He comes—but not to outward sight,
With herald angels robed in light
And choirs celestial ringing clear ;
Yet comes He still, in Christmas cheer,

In loving thought, in kindly deed,
In blessings shared with others' need,
In gentle dews of peace and love
That drop in blessing from above ;—

In humble thoughts of penitence,
In comfort known to inward sense,
In consciousness of sin forgiven,
In love—the earnest, here, of heaven ;
He comes, though not to outward ken,
To reign a King in hearts of men ;
In all things pure and just and true,
The Christ to-day is born anew.

And though in human form no more
We see Him as He walked of yore,
At even on the hillside gray,
Or in the city's crowded way,
Still may we see Him, dim or clear ;
In every heart that holds Him dear,
In every life that owns His sway,
The Life Eternal lives to-day !

Not only where the minster towers
Rear high their fretted marble flowers,
In vaulted aisles, whose echoes long
The chants of ages past prolong,
But 'neath the humblest chapel reared
'Mid stumps of virgin forest cleared,
The Babe who in the manger lay
Is near to bless the Christmas Day !

Yet still the waiting Church below
Looks onward to the daybreak's glow,
When all the dim and scattered rays,
United in one lambent blaze,
Shall crown the holy brow that wore
The crown of thorns and anguish sore ;
And His own ransomed earth shall ring
With anthems to her conquering King !

BE PATIENT AND ENDURE.

LONG is the toil, and weary is the way,
As up the mountain climb we—day by day ;
Still struggling on, while still remoter seems
The purple summit of our longing dreams ;
Jagged the stones, and rough the ground we tread,
Scarce seem we to progress,—but overhead,
Clearer the sky, the air more sweet and pure :
Be patient, then,—be patient and endure !

Heavy the fog through which we grope our way,
Hid are the skies in clouds of ashen-gray ;
All landmarks blotted out, and nought to show
The way beyond the next step, as we go ;
The light is in the clouds, and just before
We see it breaking on the farther shore.
Long may the darkness last, but light is sure :
Be patient, then,—be patient and endure !

Stormy the passage of the raging main
For the poor bark ; how all her timbers strain
To stem the waves that rear their crests, to sweep
The trembling vessel downward, fathoms deep !
Yet if she surely hold her course, nor swerves,
While compass guides, and rudder faithful serves,
Though long the struggle, yet the harbour's sure :
Be patient, then,—be patient and endure !

The mountain summit gained, the toil's forgot
In glorious outlook passing human thought ;
The fog surmounted, depths unfathomed lie
Beyond remotest stars that gem the sky.
The vessel that so staunchly holds her way
At last casts anchor in a quiet bay :
To faithful toilers the reward is sure ;
It crowneth them who to the end endure !

THE STAR IN THE WEST.

'THE world is sad and the year is old,
Life grows dark and faith grows cold ;'
So whispered at sunset the chilling blast
Ere the brief December day was past.

But look where shines o'er the cloudy bar
The pure bright ray of one silver star !
Bright Hesper-Phosphor, herald of light,
Thou comest to cheer the dark wintry night !

Hesper-Phosphor, herald of day,
Winter and darkness shall pass away ;
The sun turns back on his downward course,
And faith wakes fresh from her primal source !

The star that shone in the Syrian night
Shines ever anew with its promise bright
Of a warmer sun and a clearer day,
And the birth of a new humanity !

L'ENVOI.

THERMOMETER down below zero,
And powdery snow-drifts heaped high,
The bitter wind blowing by keenly,
A gray pall obscuring the sky ;
No sign of the gentle spring nearing,
For winter mounts guard o'er the scene,
Save one snowy crocus appearing
In the window, half shrouded in green.

Oh, welcome ! you silver-robed princess,
Looking out through your guard of green spears ;
You come with a sweet, hopeful message,
Like a smile that breaks brightly through tears ;
Of such coming incredible wonders
You tell us in prophecy sweet,
Of pure skies and of soft balmy breezes,
And wonders like you, at our feet—

Of the quickening life that is flowing
Through the boughs of the bare, budding trees,
Of the leaflets so silently growing
To dance in the light summer breeze !
Like the bright rosy streak of the morning
In silence a poem you sing,
Of the miracle yearly returning—
The wonderful birth of the spring !

EASTER LILIES.

OH, where are the sweet white lilies
That grew by the garden wall ?
We wanted them for Easter,
But there is not one at all !
Down on the bare brown garden
Their roots lie hidden deep,
And the life is pulsing through them
Although they seem to sleep ;
And the gardener's eye can see them—
Those germs that hidden lie,—
Shine in the stately beauty
That shall clothe them by-and-by !
Even so, in our hearts are growing
The lilies the Lord loves best :
The faith, the hope, the patience
He planted in the breast.
Not yet is their rich full blossom,
But He sees their coming prime
As they shall smile to meet Him
In earth's glad Easter time !
The love that striveth towards Him
Through earthly gloom and chill ;
The humble sweet obedience
Through darkness following still—

These are the Easter lilies,
Precious and fair and sweet,
We may bring to the risen Master
And lay at His blessed feet !

FOR THE TERCENTENARY OF THE DEATH
OF JOHN KNOX.

SOUND high a hymn of grateful praise o'er Scotland's
shores to-day ;
Let ancient towns with battered walls and heath-clad
mountains gray,
And purple moors and dungeon floors by Scotland's
martyrs trod,
Give back an echo to the strain of grateful praise to God !

And let the notes an echo wake from our Canadian
strand,
For Scotsmen love their native home in their adopted land,
Where many a settler's cabin walls, far in the forest wild,
Have echoed to the Scottish psalm the mother taught her
child.

Methinks, behind the gathered shades of these three
hundred years
We see a dark and troubled time of struggling hopes and
fears,
When tumults raged, and brothers' hands were dyed with
crimson stains,
And men, long fettered, woke at last to break away their
chains !

Ah ! brave young Patrick Hamilton, thy martyr-fires burn
bright,
Thou first of Scotland's witnesses, thou noble hero-
knight !
And those blue wreaths that curled that day above thy
murdered youth
Stirred up in Scotland many a soul to battle for the truth.

Full soon that truth was spread abroad in Scotland far
and wide,
Nor knightly sword nor priestly ban could stem the rising
tide ;
In vain the lurid flames delight proud Beatoun's savage
eyes,
If, for a Wishart done to death, God bids a Knox arise !
The lion-heart, the daring hand, the glance so keen and
true,
The soul on fire with holy zeal, the will to dare and do,
The skill and wisdom to design—the boldness to per-
form—
A worthy pilot Scotland found to guide her through the
storm !

It was no idle waking dream that cheered his soul that
day,
When from the galley-deck he saw St. Andrew's steeples
gray,
And seemed to hear the welcome words borne from the
well-known shore :
' Here, where thou first didst preach the Word, thy voice
shall sound once more.'

Full soon the presage was fulfilled, and tyranny's dark
night
Had vanished as the darkness flies before the dawning
light ;
For God was with His faithful ones, and His almighty
hand
Broke priestly chains and dungeon bars o'er all the
ransomed land.

And we to whom this blessing comes through long suc-
ceeding years,—
The faith our fathers won and kept through warfare, blood,
and tears,
Still let us firmly guard its truth and spread its light
abroad,
Till over every darkened land is shed the light of God !

THE GRAVE OF ELIZABETH BARRETT.
BROWNING.

THE stately City of the Flowers keeps not her Dante's
grave ;
The way-worn exile sleeps not in the land he toiled to
save ;
Yet falls her Campanile's shade on many a sacred tomb,
Dear to the hearts of other lands,—shrined in her cypress
gloom.
And one most dear to English hearts should be to
Florence dear ;
If she must out of England sleep, then happiest sleeps
she here !
For Florence sang the poet's voice and bled the loving
heart ;
And well may Florence of her soil give *her* so small a
part ;—
With myrtle wreath her resting-place, o'er which the
olives wave,
While balmiest breezes whisper low about that Tuscan
grave !

She grew—a fair young girl—amid the English daisies
springing,
And learning from the English larks the secret of their
singing ;
So sweet and bird-like were her notes, so rich and full
their tone,
As she had caught *their* music up, and kept it for her
own,
Twining, amid the songs she sang, fair flowers of English
growing,
And murmurous sounds of rustling woods and streamlets
softly flowing,
Drawing thought-treasures from old stores embalmed in
rhythmic Greek,
While the 'old poetic mountains' sent their breezes to
her cheek.

But sadder notes came all too soon to mingle with the strain ;
Too soon the fine-strung lyre must feel the thrill of grief and pain !
Though cold and cruel seemed the wave that, one fair summer day,
Flowed o'er the brightness of her life, and stole its joy away !
Yet not in vain the sorrow fell, for nobler work was hers
Than light, unruffled heart could meet, that nought but pleasure stirs.
The harp that breathes the highest notes must be most tensely strung,
The voice by suffering attuned ere noblest songs be sung ;
So the shadow of thick darkness, that only passed away
Before the clear and shining light that heralds perfect day,
Woke deeper chords to thrilling life, to nobler thought the mind,
And stirred a subtler melody, more rich and unconfined ;
And sorrow, conquered, left the soul, by suffering grown more strong,
To seize the scattered threads of thought and bind them up in song ;—
To give a voice to noble dreams, to high heroic feeling ;—
To point to heights yet unattained, their glories veiled revealing ;—
To strike and scathe with burning words the evils of her time ;—
To sing a *Miserere* sad o'er human woe and crime ;
Or, changing to a happier theme, to love unselfish, pure,
To teach that, like its heavenly source, it must for aye endure ;—
To whisper low to heavy hearts, to eyes half dimmed with tears,
To spirits sinking wearily 'neath sorrow-laden years,
The words of love and comfort sweet that to her heart were spoken—
' Songs given softly in the night ' to heal a spirit broken,
And guide hearts lying desolate, from anguish unavailing,
To love divine and fathomless, undying and unfailing !

And so her life flowed gently on, its heaven-taught task
fulfilling,
Like cadence of some noble song, our hearts with music
thrilling,
And love flowed softly through the strain ere yet its
course was run,
And blent in sweetest unison two poet-hearts in one ;
And rosy childhood stirred new depths within the
mother's breast,—
When baby-smiles gave back her own, perchance, most
truly blest,—
While wondering eyes looked into hers, new founts of
thought unsealing,
And young life opened to her gaze, new mysteries re-
vealing !
And still that harp of sweetest tone in full, sweet music
rang,
Whether of English uplands fair or hedgerows green, she
sang,
Or of the misty olive-woods, the bright ethereal sky
That arches her adopted land, her own loved Italy.
She communed with the mighty shades of that enchanted
strand,
And cheered its gallant sons to win the freedom of their
land.
The conflict thrilled her pulses through with keenest
sympathy ;
She shared the anguish of the bound, the triumph of the
free ;
And when she saw her Italy attain its glad release,
She left the storm-tossed earth, to dwell in never-ending
peace !
Farewell, thou poet-soul ! set free to sing a nobler
strain !
We could not wish the warbler pent within the cage
again.
So mourn we not for thy release from earthly pain and
sadness,
To chant in sweeter, clearer notes of undisturbèd gladness,

To drink new truth with raptured soul, to see, with vision
clear,

The key to many a mystery that oft perplexed thee here;
To bind the broken links of earth in constancy undying,
To bathe in brimming tides of love most fully satisfying;
To tune thy harp to loftier songs, with more unwavering
flight,

Since faith, in full fruition lost, has given place to sight.
Yes, thou hast won, at last, the boon desired so ardently;
God 'giveth His beloved sleep,' and He hath given it
thee!

And thy *veille* glad shall be, when endless day is
breaking,

The songs of loved ones missed awhile, whose voices
greet thy waking;

And, sweet and low, one voice Divine in all that rap-
tured meeting

Shall be to thine eternal rest thy best and dearest
greeting!

ROBERT BROWNING DEAD.

Not dead—not *dead*! 'tis but the quiet sleep

She sang of—she, his own,

Whose tender music in our hearts we keep,

Blent with his clear, strong tone,—

'The sleep He giveth unto His belovèd,'

Rest after lonely toil—

Reunion after love so long removed—

One grave in Tuscan soil.*

And what beyond? Nay, but we may not dare

To follow on their way

Twin souls that blossom into radiance rare

In light of perfect day.

* This arrangement, at first expected, was eventually changed.

But he, the seer, whose eye hath never lost
The light through darkest cloud,
Who in a faithless age, by conflict tossed,
Could sing his faith aloud ;—

Who held so firm the thread of higher life
That but beginneth here ;
Who heard the heavenly music through the strife,
And caught its cadence clear ;—

Who gave it back to us as best he could ;
Who sang so nobly this,—
That service ever shall be highest good,
And love the truest bliss,—

He is not dead, for such can never die ;
We miss him here a space ;
And yet, methinks, in yonder Christmas sky
His voice hath found its place !

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

(Suggested by his poem on Burns.)

OH, poet, who so well hast worn
The white flower of a blameless life,—
Hast all unstained thy laurels borne
Above the soil of earthly strife,

'Tis well, that, from thy vantage-post
Thou canst look down with loving ruth
On thy less happy brother, tossed
By tempest-tides of stormy youth !—

Thou who hast shown, by voice and tread,
The beauty of the upward way
That leads through life to God o'erhead,
With faith and love for staff and stay ;

Yet, with the larger charity
That fills the poet's heart and brain,
Canst see with tender sympathy
The genius dimmed by soil and stain ;—

Canst see the bitterness and pain
Beneath the outward dark defeat ;—
Canst see the precious golden grain
Amid the tares that choke the wheat !

So in thy clearer judgment lives
The vision of the nobler man
To whom his grateful country gives
A tardy homage—all she can,—

Because, 'mid every jarring tone
That marred the music of his song,
One noble love still held its own
Amid the bitter sense of wrong ;—

The love for Scotia's ' bonnie braes '—
That held his heart in golden chains ;
Now close to hers—his dearest praise—
She holds his sweet, undying strains !

So with a fuller, clearer sight,
Reversing judgment harsh and hard,
She hails thy tribute with delight
To Scotia's best-belovèd bard !

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

A SINGER who sang to a noble strain,
A worker who wrought for all noble aims,
Winning a place in the golden chain
Of England's sacred, immortal names—
He has passed away to the blissful rest
Which the hardest toilers shall prize the best.

But his mellow richness of English speech,
The musical rhythm of his simple song,
The noble lessons he sought to teach,
His love of right, and his hate of wrong—
These are not gone, but shall live, enwrought
With the fibres of England's soul and thought.

He brought to the dwellers in smoky towns

The fragrance of country lanes and leas,

The salt sea-breath of the breezy downs,

Fair dreams of Southern woods and seas,—

Of island lagoons, where the groves of palm

Lie mirrored clear in the waveless calm.

But, better still, to the toiling crowd,

By furnace-fires, amid dizzying wheels,

He brought the glad message of brotherhood

That the blest evangel of Christ reveals :

That not to be crushed by the rich man's pride

Were those He loved, and for whom He died !

Yet—not with the violent or lawless force,

Of reckless mob, or with sword in hand,

Would he set men free ;—'twas the higher source

Of Christian love should redeem the land,

And,—linking true men of whate'er estate

In union of hearts,—make his England great !

Be the dream fulfilled in the nobler age

That a nobler manhood shall grandly mould,

While his heroes win in the war they wage

With oppression of class and lust of gold ;—

So his truest monument shall rise

In England's ennobled destinies !

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

Gone beyond the veil, September, 1892.

A TRANQUIL beauty brooded o'er the day,

Fairer than summer at its midmost prime,

So softly bright the golden sunshine lay

In deep content of happy harvest-time.

And looking from the gray, pine-crested height,

In quiet, thoughtful mood, we spoke of thee,

Thy rippling verse, thy clear prophetic sight,

Thy crystal purity.

And then came one who mournful tidings bore,—
For sorrow's steeds fly swiftly on their way—
Who told us that on earth thou wert no more !
Then stole a shadow o'er the autumn day ;
Nor sky nor shore nor river seemed so fair
Now *thou* wert gone, who loved all Nature well ;
Even the gray squirrel, shyly chattering there,
Seemed the sad news to tell !

Oh, thou who ever didst, through Nature's face,
Look inwards to the over-brooding Love ;
Who, vainly straining human sight to trace
The life unseen, the thought all thoughts above,
Didst meekly fold thy hands, and sweetly trust
The love thy heart felt—though it could not see ;—
Now thy pure soul is freed from earthly dust,
We scarce may mourn for thee !

Fain would we trace thy flight to realms unseen,
Fain would we catch one lingering note from far.
In vain, in vain ! We know what thou hast been,
And fair thy memory shines, as evening star.
Fain would we feel thy spirit touch our own,
Anointing our dim eyes to vision plain ;
Yet, though the earth seems poorer—thou being gone—
We may not grudge thy gain !

And as the dying day in crimson glow
Lays on the placid stream its evening kiss,
It seems to fit thy closing life below,
Thine entrance into purer life than this.
We feel thy spirit's presence with us still,
Now thou hast gained at length thy longed-for rest ;
And love Divine, that waits our hearts to fill,
Still whispers, ' This is best !'

Through ' the great silence ' still thy voice we hear,
Lifting our hearts all earthly change above ;
Still in life's stress and pain we hold most dear
Thy tones divine of faith and hope and love.

And so we stand beside the 'silent sea,'
O'er which thine echoes seem to linger long,
And humbly thank Infinite Love for thee,
Thy service and thy song !

WHITTIER'S 'HOLY FLOWERS.'

A REMINISCENCE.

It was a saying of Whittier's that the lily of the valley is 'the holiest flower that blooms.'

OH, incense-breathing lily-bells,
How, from your alabaster urns,
The very breath of spring returns !
Up from each tiny vase it wells,
To charm us with its mystic spells.
Though cold and bleak the April day,
It seems as though the breeze of May
Were floating soft through woodland dells.

We catch the odours, sweet and shy,
Of violets, and bursting leaves,
Whose tender tracery interweaves
A misty web against the sky.
Across the lift the swallows fly ;
The blue-bird's welcome cry we hear
And the first cadence of the year,—
The robin's plaintive melody !

But sweeter memories they bring—
The memories of a day in June,
When dreams and Nature seemed in tune,
And summer kept a thought of spring ;
For your pure bells, yet blossoming,
Shed fragrance through a quiet room,
To whose still calm your 'holy bloom'
Seemed the last crowning grace to bring.

Well might your stainless bloom belong
To him who wrought his music there,

Who sang of all things bright and fair,
 Of love eternal, pure and strong,
 Of right, that yet must conquer wrong,
 Enthroned for evermore ! So ye
 Shall ever speak of him to me,
 The Galahad of love and song !

OUR DEPARTED LAUREATE.

OH, bard, beloved of all, whose glorious lyre
 To such sweet harmony was ever strung,
 That scarce we stopped to mark the heart of fire
 Beneath the music of thy silver tongue ;—
 Thou, 'mid th' immortals set by noble song,
 Whose echoes coming centuries shall prolong,—
 Strange seems it now to us that *thou* hast said,
 In wistful thought of death's eclipse,
 In shrinking dread of envious lips,—
 'What will they say of me when I am dead ?'

What say we of thee now ?—That never song
 More tuneful rang from Britain's cliff-bound coast,
 That thou hast waked from sleep—forgotten long,
 Our island story—legends almost lost !
 For us still smiles Avillon's charmèd vale,
 For us still breathe the knights of Holy Grail :
 These still abide with us, though thou art fled ;
 Though thou for aye hast 'crossed the bar,'
 Thy lingering echoes with us are.
 Thus do we speak of thee now thou art dead !

What say we of thee now ? That Nature knew
 No warmer lover—clearer eye to trace
 Her changeful moods—and read with vision true
 The meanings hidden 'neath her outward face ;
 No finer soul could life's long mystery feel,
 No heart beat truer to his country's weal ;

Thine organ tones from soul to soul shall spread !
What living bard of all thy race
Can fitly fill thine empty place ?
Thus do we speak of thee now thou art dead !

IMMANUEL.

THE rustle of the branches that, low-bending,
Weave their soft wavering shadows o'er the grass,
The play of light and shade, so subtly blending,
The cloudlets scatter as they lightly pass ;

The sweet vague secrets that the woodland keepeth,
The solemn mystery of its light and shade,
Here scarce a prisoned ray of sunlight creepeth,
While there in sunshine glows a sunny glade ;

The sparkling ripples of the wide blue river,
The sunset hues that tint its placid breast,
The shadowy lines that on its bosom quiver
In murmuring cadence, lulling us to rest ;

The tender roseate clouds that float at even
Above, or in the mirrored sky below,
As fire with glass commingled,—earth with heaven,
Transfused into one soft ethereal glow ;—

Are they not all His raiment—to our senses,
Revealing Him whom eye may ne'er behold,
Touching our hearts as subtle evidences
That *here* we clasp His vesture's outer fold ?

The smiles that flit o'er dear familiar faces,
The looks of love that light our onward way—
All human loves—are they not but the traces
Of Love that knows no shadow of decay ?

And read we not His love for us, His creatures,
In the completeness of the ordered whole,
In which we seem to know the heart and features
Of Him who is its Centre and its Soul ?

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

(Suggested by two poems of Matthew Arnold.)

HIGH nineteen hundred years ago
The Christmas stars looked down
On a young mother and her Child
In David's ancient town ;

And with deep eyes of reverent love
Upon her Babe she smiled,
While humble men in simple faith
Adored the wondrous Child.

'Goodwill to men !'—the angels' song
Beneath the Syrian sky
Woke music out of human hearts
That nevermore shall die.

'Goodwill to men !' The life that then
In Syrian valleys grew,
Bore balm for human sin and pain,
And made all old things new !

Old half-formed thoughts, old yearning cries,
Old hopes, in sadness dumb,
Old myths—unconscious prophecies
Of a bright day to come ;

Dreams of a God to earth come down
All evil to destroy,
A great Redeemer who should fill
A waiting world with joy ;—

All found in Him the meaning sweet
Hid 'neath their misty veil ;
The gods of Hellas at His feet
Laid down their garlands pale.

Valhalla's glories faded fast
Before the conquering Child,
Nor helm nor shield could long resist
That beauty undefiled.

To Him the pomp of court and hall
Professed allegiance bring ;
Before Him mailed warriors fall,
To hail Him Lord and King.

And gentle thoughts spring up like flowers
Where'er He sets His feet ;
In peasant huts and feudal towers
Grow household graces sweet !

What though He treads the Syrian soil
No more in human guise,
To heal the sick, the lame, the blind,
And bid the dead arise ;—

And some from Him have turned away,
And say—' The Christ is dead ' ;—
A myriad voices answer—' Nay !
He *is* " the Living Bread " !

The sense of His dear love to-day
Makes many an eye grow dim ;
He walks abroad where'er a heart
Has made a place for Him.

Still comes He to the poor man's door,
His scanty crust to bless,
The workhouse pauper knows Him near
To cheer her loneliness !

The dying child still yields its breath
To Him, and smiles to go ;
The strong man, trusting Him in death,
No chilling fear may know.

Alike to cottage and to throne
He comes ; where true hearts wait
He crowneth joy, and stills the moan
Of lives left desolate.

His love can cheer on arid shore
Parched by the simoon's breath ;
The isles of ocean know His power
To bless the martyr's death !

To earth's oppressed and suffering lands
His cross breathes hope to-day ;
Slaves raise to Him their suppliant hands—
He casts their chains away !

Wherever struggling millions turn
To cradle or to cross,
His love makes glad the hearts that mourn,
And turns to gain their loss.

Faith is *not* dead ; her victories
Are fresh and living still ;
Mountains of error roll away,
His promise to fulfil.

And though His Church but ill maintains
The trust He left to her,
He comes with life to fill her veins,
Her pulse to rouse and stir.

Nor only storied panes are bright
With that pure radiancy,
The common air has caught the light
That woke in Galilee !

The angels' music, onward borne,
Earth's toiling masses know ;
Without it, countless lives must mourn
Unfathomable woe !

And still, where stars of Christmas burn,
Comes the new Christmas birth,
Fresh hopes of joy and peace return
To all the waiting earth.

For still the call the rich may hear,
The poor man's lot to bless ;
At His behest, the happy cheer
The widow's sore distress.

And every Christmas morn that gleams
Upon the wintry year
Wakes millions from their careless dreams
The joyous song to hear ;

The presage of the glorious day
Creation waits in pain,
When He who in the manger lay
Shall come a King to reign !

IN MEMORIAM.

PROFESSOR J. H. MACKERRAS.*

'A man greatly beloved.'

LONG had we trembled for the life
That to our prayers was given,
And looked with reverence on a face
Touched with the glow of heaven.

The radiance of the better land
In those clear eyes was shining ;
So pure the spirit's flame shone through
The fragile form enshrining !

We sought to cheer foreboding hearts
With hopes to fears replying ;
For, listening to those cheery tones,
We could not think him dying !

And so, as sudden came the end,
As dreary seems the sorrow,
As though strong health had promised fair
For many a bright to-morrow,

We little dreamed the parting year,
With solemn, still transition,
Should bear that long familiar face
Forever from our vision.

And tears unbidden have their way
From eyes unused to weeping ;
For life looks darker for the loss
Of him—not dead, but sleeping !

* Professor of Greek in Queen's University, Kingston.

And yet it seems to us who mourn,
Even to the heaviest-hearted,
That set to music is the life
Of him who hath departed ;—

The music of a noble heart
That beat, with quick vibration,
To every true and earnest call
To serve its generation

With noble zeal that knew no stint,
With free, ungrudging labour,
Glad, while life lasted, to be spent
For God and for his neighbour !

We scarce may mourn the shortened years,
So full of truest living ;
We may not grudge the health and strength
He gave with 'cheerful giving.'

True life runs not by earthly suns,
But by the spirit's growing,
And his are the eternal years
Whence endless life is flowing !

One of God's noble ones is gone,
Yet hope smiles through our sorrow ;
The 'Resurrection and the Life'
Points to a glorious morrow.

And as we feel, with clearer sense,
That Spirit brooding o'er us,
We fain would follow in the path
Our friend has trod before us,—

That life divine, whose endless joy
Transcends our poor expressing ;
The 'walk with God'—*he* knoweth now,
The fulness of its blessing !

IN VAIN,

SOME day, perchance, in future years,
When long and green the grass is growing
Above those eyes, whence now the tears
Well up,—too ready in their flowing,—

Your own may fill, as memory, stirred,
Recalls old days, returning never ;
While springs to lip some kindly word
That must remain unsaid for ever !

The word, the look, with kindness fraught,
No human heart shall ever rue it ;
But, left undone, unsaid, the thought
Will haunt us—why we did not do it ?

The present only is our own ;
The past is gone beyond our fretting.
The future ? Ah, it *would* atone—
Too late for aught but vain regretting !

‘TENOS, THOU GOOD ONE: A TENDER
FAREWELL.’

IN MEMORIAM REV. D. J. MACDONNELL (OF TORONTO).

The inscription above quoted was found attached to one of the Egyptian tomb portraits, photographs of which were exhibited in Toronto.

THERE comes to us across the long dim ages
The lingering echo of a last farewell,
And never from the lips of saints or sages
A purer tribute fell.

‘Farewell, thou good one—now, a farewell tender’—
So runs the legend on that ancient tomb
Irradiating, with a sudden splendour,
The dark Egyptian gloom.

And we, still shadowed by the same dread sorrow
That swallows up all earthly joys in pain,
Can scarce do better, yet, than humbly borrow
The simple, old refrain!

‘Farewell, thou good one!’ to whose human weakness
Came strength and goodness from their Source
Divine,
Illumining with light of love and meekness
That earthly life of thine.

Strong because good—thy spirit, warm and fervent,
Was fired from heaven, from selfish aims set free;
To His own path the Master called His servant,
Still whispering, ‘Follow Me.’

And thou didst follow gladly where He beckoned;
No path too rugged for thy willing feet,
No toil too humble; never cost was reckoned;
Thine offering seemed complete!

Yet with the burdened years it grew completer,
Deeper thy trust—more full and pure thy love;
And, touched with sorrow, still the song grew sweeter,
More like the choir above!

And now the beauty of that likeness—growing
Through cloud and sunshine of the fruitful years,—
The fuller radiance of the spirit glowing
We clearer see through tears.

Farewell, thou good one—then—a farewell tender,
Till shadows fade before the morning light,
Touched with the pathos of a sunset splendour,
Thy memory shall be bright;

Till hope and faith are lost in full fruition,
And we, with thee, all earthly mists above,
Shall clearer see, in ‘beatific vision,’
The truth—that ‘God is love!’

THE AFTER-GLOW.

Ad superos.

THE sun behind his purple bars
Passed with the bright October day,
That now, beneath the glittering stars,
Must live alone in memory.
But on the cloudy retinue
That thronged to catch his parting smile,
A beam of light he backward threw,
That made them glorious for awhile.

So, poets, who have shed so long
About our age your nobler light,
Ere silence quench your lingering song,
Ere you have left us to the night,—
Throw back, we pray, a parting ray
On those who follow, as you go,
That, when the sun has passed away,
We still may keep the after-glow !

BON VOYAGE !

'MID winds so chill and skies so gray,
And boughs so bare of birds to say
A word of spring—'tis hard to sing
A note to cheer you on your way.
Yet, after all, what words can vie
With the old, simple, sweet 'Good-bye,'
That means so much our hearts to touch,
And yet is said so carelessly ?
He who is near, whoe'er be far,
'Neath Southern cross or Polar star,
'Mid trackless seas, or tropic trees,
Be with you wheresoe'er you are :—

In Southern ocean's clustered isles,
Round which the blue Pacific smiles ;
At gates of day, in far Cathay—
Through all the journey's countless miles :

With you upon your wandering way,
With the beloved ones who stay
'Mid home's dear walls, or college halls,
With all, until the meeting day !

So, fitly, o'er the silent throng
Float those sweet notes of solemn song,
Filling the ear with truest cheer
For partings, be they short or long.

God be with you till we shall meet
Again ! and may His comfort sweet
Abide with you, your wanderings through,
Until life's journey be complete !

THE SOWER.

To sow the precious seed with tears,
Speak truth to half-reluctant ears,
To warn, to counsel, watch, and pray,
Yet mark no fruit from day to day—

Is *this* the task the Master still
Appoints to those who delve and till
His earthly field from day to day,
Half hopeless while they work and pray ?

Yes ; for His laws are ever one
In all His realm beneath the sun.
Long seems it ere the blade appear
That promises the ripened ear.

All through the dreary winter snows
The swelling bud in silence grows
That shall unfold, in vernal air,
Its fresh young leaves and blossoms fair.

So is it, in the higher sphere,
Long ere the blade foretell the ear,
And longer ere the harvest wain
Shall garner in the golden grain.

Have patience, then ! His years are long ;
Let quiet waiting keep thee strong ;
No precious seed in vain is cast,
And thou shalt reap in joy at last !

AT LAST.

THERE is no wrong but growing years shall right it
In God's eternal reign ;
There is no evil seen, but hath to fight it
An unseen, angel-train.

To all who strive for good—the crown is given ;
So patience still endure :
To those who fight,—for them the hosts of heaven
Shall make the victory sure !

What though the prophet hath his day of sorrow,
And suffer for awhile ?
God's host is there, and His eternal morrow
Is lighted with His smile.

Then let us hope and pray, and love and labour,
Cheered by that promise bright,
Trusting through darkness, working for our neighbour—
For God and for the right !

A NEW YEAR'S WISH.

'To know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge.'

To know by surest inner sight
The love that 'passeth being known' ;
To know that this, the Infinite,
Is yet for evermore our own :

As gentle as the falling dew,
 Stronger than mightiest waves are strong,
 New, as each opening day is new,
 Old as the eternal years are long !

Wider than heaven's blue arch above
 The stars that most remotely shine ;
 Nearer than human looks of love
 That are but gleams of the Divine.

To know *that* love, most tender, true,
 Closer than earthly ties most dear—
This be the blessing ever new
 To gladden this and every year ?

IN MEMORIAM.

H. W. L.,* A NOBLE TEACHER.

'Tis once again the Eastertide,
 So bright, so full of summer calm ;
 So fair the quiet waters glide,
 The air so full of fragrant balm,
 That earth and sky and crystal tide
 Seem chanting sweet an Easter psalm ;
 So, to her risen Saviour-King,
 Methinks—a ransomed earth might sing.

How brightly in the sacred chain
 Of thoughts that with the season blend,
 Thy well-known image shines again
 In memory's light, belovèd friend !
 Though now we seek thy smile in vain,
 Our converse hath not here its end ;
 So linked art thou with this blest day
 Thou scarcely seemest passed away !

Thine Easter song shall sweetly flow,
 Unmingled now with loss or pain,

* Hannah W. Lyman, first Principal of Vassar College, New York State, and previously an esteemed teacher in Montreal, Canada.

And we in shadow here below
Can almost hear the joyous strain ;
For ' Worthy is the Lamb,' we know,
Is evermore the glad refrain ;
How, in the sunshine of His grace,
Must thou rejoice to see His face !

We still must keep the feast below,
Partake the sacramental wine ;
Thou needest no memorials now
In presence of the Living Vine.
Yet, though our tears will have their flow
We would not at thy gain repine ;
For our communion still shall be
With thee through Christ—in Him with Thee !

We know not what new realms of thought
Have opened to thine eager gaze ;
We know not how thy soul is taught
The knowledge of God's hidden ways ;—
How problems once with mystery fraught
Now fill thy heart with grateful praise,
While we must wander still and wait
In the dim light without the gate !

But well we know thy longing heart
Hath seen fulfilled its sweetest dreams ;
Hath found its ever-blessèd part
In that deep love whose gladsome beams
It sought afar—as seeks the hart,
Athirst, the crystal-flowing streams,
Now, bathing in that glorious tide,
At last, at last—is satisfied !

Well—though we cannot grasp the bliss
That fills thy cup of gladness there,
Nor know what we shall gain or miss
In life that tends—we know not where,
We may go forward, knowing this—
Who cared for thee for us will care—

And, in the 'many mansions,' we
At last shall share thy rest with thee.

But while on earth shall lie our lot,
We cherish still the thought of thee ;
The living lesson thou hast taught
Of faith and hope and charity.
The life with patient labour fraught,
From self and selfish aims set free ;
A power our slower hearts to move,
To follow in thy path of love !

We thank God for thy life below,
We thank Him for the quiet rest
Of which such toilers only know
The sweetness, when at length possessed.
The words that here thou lovedst so,
In whose fulfilment thou art blest,
Those words of comfort, still and deep,
We softly murmur while we weep :
'He giveth His beloved sleep !'

‘WHO SHALL ROLL AWAY THE STONE ?’

In silence of the morning gray,
Ere one pale streak foretold the day,
To the still garden and the tomb
The mourning women took their way,
Scarcely discerning 'mid the gloom
The cave ; and—‘Who shall roll away
The stone ?’ ask wistfully.

The stone was gone, the open grave
Was empty ! He who came to save
Had risen, as Himself had said,
To reign, the Lord of life and light,
And there, to soothe their grief and dread,
Behold ! an angel robed in white
To cheer their tear-dimmed sight.

So, often, on our hearts we bear
The stony weight of dull despair ;
Still seems the Christ to fail and die,
And Hope to hide her cheering ray,
Till by the grave we mournful cry,
‘ The stone ! oh, who shall roll away
The bar that blocks our way ?’

Until the Presence by our side
Our half-closed eyes hath opened wide
And shown us He is with us still ;
So they who labour day by day,
Their heaven-sent mission to fulfil,
Shall know in Him their strength and stay—
All barriers rolled away !

THE SPRING IN THE WILDERNESS.

BRIGHT broke the rosy dawn o’er Edom’s hills,
And, like a fairy shower, the sunbeams fell
On leaf and flower, all diamonded with dew ;—
Glistening upon the tendrils of the vine,
And, glancing through the spreading cedar’s shade,
Where coo the turtle-doves at early dawn.
They glimmered through the silent, shadowy grove
Of terebinths, by Abraham’s dwelling-place—
A living temple for the living God—
Columned and arched with giant-spreading boughs,
Its canopy green leaves and azure sky.
Close by it, on a fair and fertile glade,
In long array of tents, the patriarch dwelt,
With all the men and maidens of his house,
And wealth of flocks, and lowing herds of kine.
Gaily the early birds were carolling
Their morning songs beneath a sky serene ;
All sights and sounds with summer gladness gay,
Save where, with lingering foot and backward glance—
Unwilling outcasts from that peaceful home—
Wandered a weeping mother and her child

Her sunburnt brow and dark, soft drooping eye
Betrayed her birthplace, where the fruitful Nile
Floods arid Egypt with his yearly tides ;—
A slave bestowed by Egypt's royal lord
Upon the Hebrew stranger's stately wife,
Faring with him through the mysterious land
Where Isis rules supreme. 'Th' Egyptian maid
Forgot full soon her country's idol shrines
That rise in massive grandeur to the sky,
And learned to bow the knee with reverent awe
To Abraham's God, the high and mighty One,
Who dwelleth not in temples made with hands ;
And He, who, throned in majesty, looks down
With pitying love on all His feeble folk,
Had sent a radiant messenger from heaven
To counsel and to succour the poor slave
When, once before, she wandered o'er the wild,
Seeking a refuge from the upbraiding words
Of her stern mistress. Then, with docile heart,
Yielding obedience to the heavenly Voice,
She turned and bowed her to the yoke once more ;
And when her baby, smiling on her breast,
Woke in her heart the joy of motherhood,
She called the child by the great name of Him
Who looked upon her in her hour of need.
That child, now grown almost to manhood's height,
Though not to manhood's years, strode by her side
As forth she wandered, outcast once again.
For the youth's lofty mien and haughty ways
And flashing eye and bold, defiant glance
Had shown the untamed pride that could not brook
To yield his hopes, as Abraham's first-born son,
To Sarah's child ; and her maternal fears
Had pressed the patriarch, till, with heavy heart,
Reluctantly he banished from his home
The weeping mother and her stripling son,
To find another home as best they might !
They wandered towards Beersheba's wilderness—
At first o'er swelling glades and flowery sward,
And where the tamarisk and cypress grew

Beside dry water-courses. Then the way
More sterile grew and arid, till the grass
Lay dry and parched beneath their weary feet ;
Low hills of shifting sand their steps delayed
As painfully they climbed them one by one ;
The sun blazed hotly in the cloudless sky ;
The outline of the distant mountain ridge
Showed dim and wavering through the dazzling glare ;
No breeze was stirring in the bending broom,
Or rustled through the foliage of the palm.
The silence round them more oppressive grew ;
No sound broke on the dreary solitude,
Save the wild bee, on drowsy humming wing,
Looking in vain for some stray clover bloom,
Or the ill-omened raven's distant cry,
That struck strange terror to the mother's heart ;
For they had drained, to the last precious drop,
Their little store of water, and for more
They strained their weary, wistful eyes in vain !
And, even while she watched him, Hagar knew
The boy's young strength was failing. His dark eye,
So lately sparkling with fresh, vigorous life,
Was dim and drooping now ;—the buoyant step
Lagged wearily ; the glad and silvery tones,
That oft had cheered her heart in many an hour
Of trial, *now* she longed in vain to hear.
And while she watched him pining, all forgot
Were her own weakness, weariness, and thirst :
Of him alone she thought ! Her burning lips
Seemed coolness to the burning heart within !
Still with undaunted will, but frame unstrung,
The boy strove on, till Nature's spring gave way,
And he sank swooning to the burning ground.
Full well the mother's anguished heart foreknew
That death was hovering o'er her fainting boy.
In vain she looked, once more, with frantic gaze :
No fountain gushing from its rocky bed
Poured forth its sparkling tide beside her now !
How wistfully her restless thoughts flew back
To the sweet waters of her childhood's Nile,

That had so often quenched her thirst in youth !
Oh for one draught of that life-giving tide,
To give new vigour to her sinking boy !
Alas ! it might not be ! Then, with a cry
Exceeding bitter, of despairing grief,
She turned her from the spot where Ishmael lay
Unconscious, 'neath the broom-plant's scanty shade,
That scarcely screened him from the westering sun ;
Then, bowing low, she closed her burning eyes,
That so she might not see the dying pangs
Of her belovèd one ; and bitter thoughts
Trooped one by one across her dreaming soul :—
Sweet memories of peaceful eventides,
When she his baby lullaby had sung,
And sat beside him as he sank to sleep
In quiet rest of guileless infancy ;
Then visions of his childhood—and her pride
When the brave stripling, foremost in the chase,
Bravest in manly sport, still proudly owned
His cherished mother in the Egyptian slave.
What proud, ambitious dreams of future power
And greatness, for her darling she had dreamed !
Now *all* had vanished, and her bleeding heart
Could look for nothing but a lonely death
Unseen, unwept, in that dread wilderness !

The thunder-cloud, retiring in the west,
Looks blackest where it meets the golden sky ;
The dreary night is darkest ere the dawn
Outspreads the rosy mantle of the morn.
Thus often human woe is deepest then,
When—though we know it not—help is at hand !
And even while Hagar sat, absorbed in grief,
A gentle touch aroused her. With a start
She turned, and saw the well-remembered form,
The radiant brow, the gracious, pitying eye,
That once before had blessed her wandering way.
The Angel of the Covenant stood revealed ;—
He who is ever near in time of need
To succour and support the sons of grief.

And as she knelt, imploring Him for aid,
He raised her up with words of gracious cheer,
And led her where a rising slope concealed
A fountain welling clear from pebbly bed.
With rushing tears of joy and grateful love,
She turned to thank and bless her gracious Friend,
But He had vanished !

Then, with eager haste,
She ran to fill her bottle, and to pour
The cooling draught o'er Ishmael's parching lips—
Bright pledge of strength restored, of life, of hope
To reach at last a spot where they could rest,
And find new friends, new helpers, and a home,
Knowing that He who hears young ravens cry
Will not forsake the human seeker's need !

'LORD, THAT I MAY RECEIVE MY SIGHT!'

PRISONED in perpetual night,
Pierced by no sweet ray of light ;
Vainly turning vacant eyes
Toward the sunlit summer skies.
Not for him the sunbeams played,
Quivering, through the cedar shade—
Faces dear and children's smile,
His dark hours might ne'er beguile !

But he hears the people cry :
' One called Jesus passeth by—
One whose wondrous strength can quell
All the demon powers of hell ;
When He speaks, Death quits his prey,
Blind eyes catch the light of day.
Haste to claim that healing might—
He can give thee back thy sight.'

Not in vain the suppliant cries :
Towards Him turn those tender eyes ;
O'er his dark and bitter lot
Yearns the Master's pitying thought.

Straightway from the gracious Lord
Speeds the swift restoring word,
Answering the cry for light :

‘ Let me, Lord, receive my sight !’

From the darkness deeper still,
Brooding o’er the sin-bound will ;
From the blindness that beclouds
Those whom error’s night enshrouds ;
From the rising fogs of doubt,
Shutting heaven’s own sunshine out,
Clear our vision with Thy light,—
Let us, Lord, receive our sight !

From the scales the light which hide,
Passion—prejudice, and pride—
Darkling films of sin and sense,
False mirage of vain pretence,
Making truth as falsehood seem ;
From the mote and from the beam
Free our eyes to hold Thy light,—
Let us, Lord, receive our sight !

So that, with a vision clear
From the mists that blind us here—
Mists from this dark earth that rise,
Casting glamour o’er our eyes,
We may see the narrow way
Lighted by a heavenly ray,
Till, in God’s own perfect light,—
We at last receive our sight !

THE BETTER PART.

BETTER a thousand times the yearning sadness
That clusters round the thought of the departed,
Of those who shared thy sorrow, made thy gladness,
And when they left thee—left thee broken-hearted ;
Better to bear the weary aching sorrow
That fills the long hours of the sleepless night,
The restless search on every new to-morrow
For those who nevermore may bless thy sight !

Yes, better all the pain and all the longing,
The ceaseless craving for the loved and lost,
Than doom of feeling, 'mid all blessings thronging,
Thy cold heart bound in icy chain of frost.
Oh, thou who lovest not, thy doom unfathomed,
Thou knowest not—'tis well thou mayst not know;—
Yet pray that love Divine thy heart awaken,
And save it from this lowest depth of woe !

A BURNS ANNIVERSARY.

(Lines suggested by a lecture on the poet by Principal Grant at a birthday celebration.)

WITHOUT, the 'blast of Janwar' wind'
Seemed in our ears and hearts to linger,
That on a wintry night lang syne
Blew hansom in on Scotland's singer.
Within we listened, all intent
On words inspired by tenderest feeling ;
The music of the poet's soul
Seemed softly o'er our pulses stealing.
We saw the eager ploughman lad,
As by the banks of Ayr he wandered,
With burning eyes and swelling heart,
And first on song and Scotland pondered,
And thought of Bruce and Wallace Wight,
Who freed his land from tyrant's fetter,
And longed to make, for her dear sake,
A 'sang' at least, if nothing better !
We saw him, as from Nature's hand
His own drew draughts of joy o'erflowing ;—
The plover's voice, the briar-rose,
The tiny harebell lightly growing,
The blue sky o'er the gowan'd lea,
The foxglove's bell, the hawthorn blossom
Unsealed the fount of love that rose
So strongly in his youthful bosom.

The wounded hare that 'hirpled past,'
The 'tim'rous mousie's' ruined dwelling,
The cattle cowering 'neath the blast,
The dying sheep her sorrows telling,—

All touched the heart that kept so strong
Its kinship with all sentient being,
And saw in simplest things of life
The poetry that waits the seeing.

We saw him 'mid the golden grain,
Conning the oldest of romances,
As, first, his boyish pulses stirred
A bonnie lassie's gentle glances.

We saw the birk and hawthorn shade
Droop o'er the tiny rippling river,
Where he and his dear Highland maid
Sobbed their farewell, alas! for ever!

There be the poet's wish fulfilled,
That 'simmer ever langest tarry';
For all who love the poet's song
Must love his gentle 'Highland Mary.'

Alas! that other things than these
Were written on the later pages,
Which made that tortured soul of his
A byword to the coming ages!

For many see the marring sins
They lightly judge on slight acquaintance;
But not the agony of grief
That proved his passionate repentance.

'Twas his to feel the anguish keen
Of noblest powers to mortals given,
While tyrant passions chained to earth
The soul that might have soared to heaven.

'Twas his to feel in one poor heart
Such war of strong conflicting feeling
As makes this life of ours too deep
A mystery for our unsealing:

The longing for the nobler course,
The doing of the thing abhorrent,
Because the lower impulse rose
Resistless as a mountain torrent,—
Resistless to a human will,
But not to that which had been given
Had he but grasped the anchor true
Of 'correspondence fixed wi' heaven !'

Ah well ! he failed ; but let us look
Through tears upon our sinning brother,
As thankful that we are not called
To hold the balance for each other.

And never lips than his have pled
More tenderly and pitifully
To leave the erring heart with Him
Who loves it, and will judge it truly !

And yet, it is not all a dream
That we have heard a voice from heaven :
'Behold this heart hath lovèd much,
And much to it shall be forgiven !'

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

BENEATH the frosty starlight of December,
The Old Year silently hath sped away,
And solemn chimes are bidding us remember
That this is New Year's Day.

Yet as old friends who, faithful and true-hearted,
Gather to talk of one just laid to rest,
And cherish looks and tones of the departed,
And think they loved *him* best—

So, round the vanished year, its joys and sorrows,
Our thoughts still linger with a tender clasp ;
Even its saddest hour some sweetness borrows,
Since wrested from our grasp !

Its springtide promise—months of summer gladness,
Bright autumn days when Nature's bounties fall,
And hours when faith and hope have conquered sadness,
Perchance the best of all !

And though too conscious sin and failure darken
The shadowy retrospect our thoughts pursue,
Yet at the Cross our hearts may leave the burden,
And so begin anew !

Then turning to the dear familiar pages—
Dear, although some are blurred with many a tear,
We add them to the roll of by-past ages,
And say, ' A glad New Year '

For all we love, yet knowing well that never
Since Eden's gates the angel closed for aye
Could human wishes shut out pain, or sever
Sorrow from life's brief day !

Still, hope is ours—man's dearest gift from heaven—
And so the old familiar wish is said,
That sunny days and bright hours may be given ;
Or if, indeed, instead,

Dark ones are sent by wisdom never-failing,
Our little love and wisdom far above,
His presence may go with them still, unveiling
The sunshine of His love !

And still we hope and wait the glad time bringing
An end to all the evils of the times ;
Not yet—not yet—we hear those joy bells ringing
Their clear, unclouded chimes !

Still lasts the weary reign of pain and terror,
Man grinding in the dust his fellow-man,
Upholding in his blindness wrong and error,
Brute force and tyrant's ban ;

Still wrong, unblushing, sitteth in high places,
And falsehood stalks with bold triumphant tread,
And greed and avarice, with brazen faces,
Would sell the poor for bread !

And still does brother alien stand from brother,
Though fighting side by side with kindred aims ;
Wounding, misjudging, hindering one another,
Because of differing names.

Soon may He come to whom the right is given
To rule the nations, while He makes them free ;
Whose reign is light and love, and peace and heaven,
Unto the utmost sea !

When shall it dawn, that golden age of gladness,
The world's long hope—and it hath waited long—
Ringing out war and discord, sin and sadness,
In a new Christmas song ?

Perchance, perchance, that glorious day is breaking
Whose hope the weary heart with rapture fills ;
Lone watchers see its golden dawn awaking
Beyond the distant hills !

Meantime, for all we love, and fain would gather
Beneath the wings of Thy most tender care,
We thank Thee, oh, our living, loving Father,
That Thou dost answer prayer ;—

That every helpless longing,—wordless yearning,
Fain to bring help, yet powerless to redress,
Laid on Thy heart, to strength our weakness turning,
Even our love can bless !

But if, as some would dream, Thy love were banished
From being's cold, material, loveless sphere,
Oh, who could breathe, in realms whence hope had
vanished
The prayer, 'A glad New Year' !

A FAREWELL.

Across the sky the birds their flight are winging,
Chanting their warbled matins wild and sweet ;
Amid the grass, the year's first blossoms, springing,
Are opening at our feet.

Oh, strange and sad it seems that here no longer
Thy radiant smile our earthly path may light,
That through the whole wide world though we may
wander,
It cannot meet our sight !

So clearly rise thy form and face before us,
Thy silvery tones we almost seem to hear ;
Alas ! 'tis memory throws its glamour o'er us,
And fancy cheats the ear.

In vain we turn to the forsaken dwelling
Where thy bright welcome was so dear and sweet ;
For there, all fond illusions quick dispelling,
A dreary blank we meet.

In vain we look where the long pine-boughs, swaying,
Breathe fresh sweet incense on the warm spring air ;
On that green mound, the chequered sunbeams playing
Tell us—*thou* art not there !

Ah, no, not there ! and yet, though death divide us,
We can divine that thou mayst nearer be
Than when thou still wert walking here beside us ;
Now—from earth's trammels free,—

Thy heart more loving still, thine insight clearer,
'Ihy ready sympathy more full and deep.—
Yes, we may feel thee closer still and dearer,
Not lost in dreamless sleep !

VALE ET SALVE !

FAREWELL, Old Year !
We hailed thy birth with joyous hope and glee,
With chime of welcoming bells and festal cheer
We gave Thee joy for all Thou wert to be—
The heir of centuries ; we greeted thee,
And now we silent stand beside thy bier,
Thou old dead year !

Oh, treacherous year !
Thou camest, bringing blessings manifold.
But yet some precious things to us more dear
Than gleam of gem or miser's hoarded gold
Thy hands, relentless, loosened from our hold,
As from the tree the leaflets brown and sere,
Oh, ruthless year !

Nay ! more, Old Year !
Some well-beloved taking by the hand,
Thou led'st into the silence, where no tear
Or call of ours may reach the unknown strand,
Whence none returns again ;—the silent land,
Whence comes no sign to longing mourners here.
Farewell, sad year !

Now *thou*, Old Year,
Hast passed away into the silence, too ;
No strongest will or grasp could keep thee here,
Nor fancy bright, nor memory fond and true
One parted hour of thine can e'er renew—
One sunny gleam or word of joy and cheer,
Dead, vanished year !

And yet, Old Year,
Deep in our inmost hearts thou livest yet,
Thy saddest hours are still to memory dear ;
Close woven in our web of life is set
Each gleam of joy or hope—each dark regret
That marked thy changeful course among us here,
Departed year !

All hail, New Year !
Again the air with joyous greeting rings ;
Once more we hopeful say, ' A glad New Year !'
For in our hearts God's angel ever sings
The hope that each returning season brings,
Of unknown, endless good that yet shall cheer
Some new, glad year !

EHEU FUGACES !

IN vain our longing hearts would grasp
A moment from the fairest day ;—
Scarce has it met our eager clasp,
When 'tis forever fled away !

The fragrance of the sweetest flower
That opens to the summer sun,—
Swift passes with the passing hour,
And dies,—its little service done !

The music of the noblest strain
Scarce has it met the listening ear,
When dies away its last refrain
Nor leaves one lingering echo here !

And yet—what though it all departs
So swiftly from our life away,
If only, in our heart of hearts,
We keep the beauty that will *stay* ?

What matter if the restless tide
Maintain its restless ebb and flow,—
If, only, in our souls abide
The fountain whence its waters flow ?

If but we feel, within the soul,
The brooding Spirit from above,
The moving impulse of the whole,—
Infinite source of Life and Love !

The great I AM, for evermore,
That gave the first creative word,
Who shall abide when Time is o'er—
The living Spirit of the Lord !

LITTLE THINGS.

ONLY a little thing,—a word or two,—no more,—
But it pierced with its tiny sting and left a true heart sore,
It hushed awhile the music that hearts alone can hear,
And dimmed the inward sunshine that else had been so
clear !

Only a little thing ;—a word,—a smile,—so slight,—
Scarce could one tell the reason why it made the day so
bright,
Why it brought the light of heaven to cheer the troubled
heart,
And closed the dusky shadows, like morning mists,
apart !

Only a little thing,—the breadth of a hair, so small,—
That neither eye nor ear were 'ware of its silent fall,—
Yet it turned sweet chords to discord and jarred the
noble score,
And—not till it was banished, could the music breathe
once more.

Only a little thing,—a blighting breath that blew
O'er the exquisite breath of the flower, and dulled its
tender hue ;
Yet ne'er again shall it glow in the light of the morning
sun,
For the soul of its beauty is dead, and its fragile life is
done !

Only a little thing,—yet from tiniest sources flow
The wondrous waves of being from which a world shall
grow,—
And in unseem germs may lurk the poison-bearing
breath
That shall lay the hope of a nation low in the grasp of
death !

Only a little thing ! yet the small beginnings hold
The mightiest future issues that centuries shall unfold,
So,—handling the little things with soft and reverent
touch—
We shall prove that ‘ the faithful in little the faithful is in
much !’

OUR DUMB BROTHERS.

SEE a countless multitude about us
Claiming sympathy—our humble kin ;
Sadly have they learned to fear and doubt us.
Driven from our side by human sin ;
Yet, though dumb, their hearts to ours are speaking,
Help and kindness from us ever seeking—
Kindness hard to win !

Inarticulate voices,—groans of anguish,
Patient sighs ’neath burdens hard to bear ;
From lone places, where dumb victims languish,
Plaintive moans are floating on the air !
Soft eyes seeking ours with earnest pleading ;—
Can we turn away with hearts unheeding
That unuttered prayer ?

Innocent of wrong, our own transgression
Lays on them a heavy load of pain,
Sharing all the misery and oppression
Man has wrought beneath his iron reign.
Touch all hearts, O Thou Divine Preserver,
Till they burn with generous love and fervour
To remove the stain !

They and we are in our Father’s keeping,
Whose compassion broods o’er great and small ;
Not one wrong eludes that eye unsleeping,
Not one humblest life unseen shall fall ;
None can serve Him with a heart unheeding
His dumb creatures’ inarticulate pleading,
For *He* loveth all !

THE FIRST BIRDS.

WHO taught you to pour forth your notes, little singers,
 From the branches so leafless and bare?
Your music delays not, though springtime still lingers,
 And chill is the biting March air;
 Ice-bound are the rivers, frost-bound are the fields,
 And the nights are still dreary and long.
 Say, have you a charm that keeps you from harm
 In the gladness that sweetens your song?
 And where will you go when the daylight is shrouded?
 Are you sure of a bed and a home,
 That thus ye sing on, with your music unclouded
 By the thought of the cold night to come?
 Ye have the sweet secret of banishing sorrow,
 No care can your gladness subdue,
 A trusting heart, taking no thought for the morrow,
 And God Himself careth for you!

‘DOE YE NEXT THINGE.’

An inscription carved over a chimney-piece in a ducal hall in
 England.

ONLY one round at a time canst thou mount on Life's
 ladder,—the *next* ;—
 Give to it, then, all thy strength,—nor linger in doubt
 and perplexed,
 Watching the *sides* of the ladder, and hoping to climb
 With one bound ;—all in vain,—thou must mount by
one round at a time !
 This is the lesson Life teaches,—the old heaven-given
 command,—
 To do, with the might that is in us,—the thing that is
 nearest our hand,—
 So the little shall grow to the great, and the good to the
 best,
 And, by climbing one round at a time,—the heavens are
 possessed !

Even, to the faithful climber, toiling on,—hand over
hand,—
Angel faces come smiling,—bright forms close to him
stand,
Whispering message of hope,—giving him words of
cheer,
Guiding him ever upward, to the heavens so blue and
clear !

Courage we need and patience,—both,—for the battle of
life,—
Courage to mount still upward, over the toil and the
strife,—
Patience to wait the unfolding of God's long purpose
and grand,
And to do, in the very next moment,—the thing that is
nearest our hand !

THE PARTING YEAR.

GONE at last, and gone for ever,
With that solemn midnight chime,
Gone, with all its springtime blossom,
And the fruitage of its prime !
Faint we hear its parting footsteps
Down the echoing aisles of time.

In the hushed and solemn moments,
While the night to morning clings,
Comes a veiled and silent angel,
With a rustle of soft wings,
'Neath his flowing vesture hidden
Unknown gifts to all he brings.

What they are, in vain we wonder,
All in vain we question now ;
Well the angel keeps the secret
With his calm, impassive brow ;
But we know *Love* plans our future,
So we are not careful *how* !

If there come not what we hope for,
 If there come the things we dread,
 Yet we will not faint or falter ;
One hath marked the path we tread,
 Blessed in gladness or in sorrow,
 Following where Himself hath led.

But the stately, silent angel
 Bears a volume, blank and white,
 What within it shall be written,
 Mainly it is ours to write ;
 May it show a fairer record
 Than the one that closed to-night !

Where dark lines of wrong and hatred
 Marred the record as it ran,
This year stand in golden letters,
 'Love and truth to God and man' ;
 So our perverse human passions
 Mar not the Designer's plan !

Yet, O life's Recording Angel,
 Take each blurred, imperfect line,
 Dip it in Love's cleansing fountain
 Till all fair and pure it shine ;
 And as grow the pages fewer,
 Lift us nearer the Divine !

THE PASSING OF THE CENTURY.

'Le roi est mort,—vive le roi.'

'MID storm and strain, 'mid gloom and pain,
 With wild winds wailing by,
 The sands of the century's life run fast,
 And he sighs, as he sadly scans the past,
 Ere he lays him down to die !

He brought such a freight of hopes elate,
 Such a wealth of scheme and plan !
 O'er his childhood's years the joy-bells rang,
 And the prophets dreamed and the poets sang
 The boons he brought for man !

For the demon of war should be banished far,
With the powers of hate and sin,
Banished each jarring note of strife,
For the brother-heart should be waked to life,
And the years of peace come in !

But alas ! to his ear, through the Christmas cheer
Came the notes of the bugle-call,
The clash of swords and the cannon's boom,
The cries of the wounded, through strife and gloom,
Like a knell, on his ears they fall !

The captive's moan and the widow's groan,
The wail of want and pain,
The slave's lament, 'neath alien skies,
The dumb beasts' inarticulate cries,
Blend in one sad refrain !

But there comes a light to the failing sight,
To his lips a parting song,
' I have sown good seed with many tears,
And the fruit shall ripen in golden years,
Though the harvest tarry long.

' Through a mist I see who follows me—
The latest born of Time—
Buds of promise he bears, that hold
The years of peace, and the age of gold
For the earth's glad coming prime !'

So the century smiled at the tempest wild
And peacefully passed away,
Since he saw—through the night of storm and strain,
Through the shadow of mystery, death and pain,
The dawn of the rising day !

The night may be long, but the morning song
Wakes, long before the light,
To bring to the hearts that dimly grope,
The strength of faith, and the joy of hope
For the daylight, clear and bright !

THE HUNDREDTH YEAR

A LEGEND OF HUMANITY.

IN the heart of the shadowy mountains,
In a cavern, hidden deep,
They tell us,—brave Barbarossa
'Mid his warriors lies,—asleep.
And deep is that long, long slumber,
And little he recks or cares
Of the rise or the fall of empires,—
Of the conflicts of troubled years !

But,—they say—when Time's solemn finger
Points again to the hundredth year,
He rises, and looks through the dawning
To see if the time be near,—
The time when the hearts of the nations
Shall throb to the angels' song,
And the reign of Love and Justice
Shall banish the rule of wrong.

Alas !—'tis the din of battle,—
The clamour of strife and sin,—
The cry of the suffering,—the smitten,
That the year still ushers in !
And he strokes his beard in sorrow
And mournfully shakes his head,
And turns again to his slumber,
Till a century more hath sped !

There he waits for the promised coming
Of the King who shall rule for aye,
With Peace and Love for his heralds
On the world's glad Christmas-Day !
When—not in the lowly manger,
But, set on His rightful throne,—
New-born in the hearts of the nations,
The Christ shall reign alone !

IV.

BALLADS OF LOVE AND LABOUR.

AFTER THE SILVER WEDDING.

LIEBCHEN ! Liebchen !
Half of fifty years
Wind away behind us,
With their smiles and tears ;
Now we look behind us,
Not before—as when
First we roamed together
Through the woodland glen !

Liebchen ! Liebchen !
How you tripped, that day,
Through the bright spring sunshine,
Fresh with breath of May,
With the fair white lilies
Gleaming on your breast !
Liebchen ! Liebchen !
Don't you know the rest ?

Liebchen ! Liebchen !
Still I see you there,
With the fresh breeze ruffling
Your soft chestnut hair ;—
Fair and shy, and seeming
Of the spring a part,
Liebchen ! Liebchen
Crept into my heart !

Liebchen ! Liebchen !
Now you trip no more ;
Matrons walk sedately,
Dancing days are o'er ;
In your chestnut tresses
Mingle threads of gray—
Liebchen ! Liebchen !
'Tis not always May !

Yet, think you I cherish
Less my faithful wife,
True through storm and sunshine,
Tried by years of life,
Than the blushing maiden
Set by love apart ?
Yet I keep *her*, Liebchen,
In my inmost heart.

And when mortal weakness
Shall have passed away,
I shall see you, Liebchen,
As you stood that day ;
Fair as that bright vision
I shall see you stand,
In the spring immortal
Of a fairer land !

For the cares and sorrows
Of this life below
Perfect noble beauty
That in heaven shall glow.
Look we on, then, Liebchen,
Not look back and sigh ;
For we know, my Liebchen,
Love can never die !

THE MADONNA OF THE ENTRY.

In a city of churches and chapels,
From belfry and spire and tower,
On the solemn and starlit silence
The bells chimed the midnight hour.

Then, in silvery tones of gladness,
They rang in the Christmas morn,
The wonderful, mystical season
When Jesus Christ was born !

And all thought of the Babe in the manger,
The Child that knew no sin,
That hung on the breast of the mother
Who ' found no room in the inn.'

All thought of the choir of angels
That swept through the darkness then,
To chant forth the glad Evangel
Of peace and love to men !

* * * * *

In that city of churches and chapels
A mother crouched, hungry and cold,
In a dark and cheerless entry,
With a babe in her nerveless hold.

Hungry and cold and weary,
She had paced the streets all night ;
No home for *her* in the city,
No food, no warmth, no light.

And just as the bells' glad chiming
Pealed in the Christmas Day,
The angels came down through the darkness
And carried the babe away.

No room for one tiny nursling
In that city of churches fair ;
But the Father hath ' many mansions '
And room for the baby there !

JOE BIRSE, THE ENGINEER.*

HAVE we not still our heroes,
With pulses strong and true,
In life's sharp stress and conflict,
Ready to dare and do?
Let all who hold true manhood
And knightly courage dear
Honour one humble hero,
Joe Birse, the engineer!

The train sweeps through the darkness
Its precious freight of lives,
Of fathers, mothers, brothers,
Of sisters, husbands, wives,
Straight to the cold black river;
None dream of danger near,
None see the deadly peril,
Save Joe, the engineer.

O'er the white feath'ry snowdrifts
The headlight throws its glare
On to that awful blackness,
That gulf of dark despair
Swift speeds the panting engine
With fiery, throbbing breath;
Defying brake and throttle,
It plunges on—to death!

Oh, hearts and homes awaiting
Those husbands, fathers, wives!
Must the dark river swallow
That treasure of dear lives?
Does *he* think, in the quiver
Of nerves at utmost strain,
Of one home waiting for him?
Ah! must it wait in vain?

* The Scotch engineer of a train on the Canadian Grand Trunk Railway which dashed on through an open switch to the brink of the St. Lawrence at Lachine. Through the heroism of the engineer the train was stopped on the brink, but the locomotive plunged into the river, bearing with it the heroic engineer.

No time to pause or question ;
 One impulse in his breast,—
 If power of man can do it,
 That he must save the rest !
 With one tremendous shudder
 The train stops—short and sheer ;
 Onward still darts the engine—
 God help the engineer !

God help him ? Nay ; He called him
 To win life's noblest crown,
 As, in that cold black water,
 He went, unflinching, down.
 What better than to follow
 Where Love Divine hath trod ;
 Himself to give for brother man,
 Then—through the dark—to God !

THE GOOD-BYE AT THE DOOR.*

GOOD-BYE to the wife and children, a kiss to the baby—last,
 As into the cold gray morning the husband and father
 passed ;

For the holiday was over, and the week-day work begun,
 So good-bye to the happy home till the daily task be done !

But the daily task was ended, although he knew it not ;
 A train to an unknown country unwittingly he sought ;
 While o'er the fiery chariot the pitying angels wait,
 To bear each faithful spirit on through the golden gate.

A shout ! A shock ! A crash ! and over the pure white
 snow
 Is scattered a mass of wreck, and the human freight below.

* A party of workmen, leaving Toronto for their place of employment on the morning of January 2, 1884, were crushed to death through the train falling over an embankment. An actual incident suggested the opening lines.

But alas for the wives at home, and the children that no
more
Shall welcome home their father when the daily task is
o'er !

O Earth, thou art full of sorrow ! O Life, thou art
all too sad !

Save for the light from heaven, which can make the
mourner glad

With the hope of the life immortal, that holds the key of
this,

So the joy of the coming meeting may thrill through
Love's parting kiss !

And perchance the angels heard the songs from the other
shore

Blend with the mortal music of the good-bye at the door—

Good-bye to the wife and children, a kiss to the baby—last,

As into the spirit-world, through the cold gray morn he
passed !

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOSPITAL.

An' is it Christmas mornin' ? I've lost my count of time,
But I thought it must be Christmas, by the bells' sweet
solemn chime ;

And I had a dream of the home-folks, just as the
mornin' broke ;

Maybe 'twas the bells that brought it, ringin' before I
woke.

An' is it Christmas mornin' ? An' while I'm lyin' here
The folks to church are goin', the bells do ring so clear !
Father an' mother an' children, merrily over the snow,
Just as we always used to go on Christmas long ago.

Oh yes, I know you're good, nurse,—an' I do try not to
fret,

But at Christmas-time, no wonder if my eyes with tears
are wet,

For in my dream I saw so plain the brown house by the mill,

An' my father an' my mother ; ah, me ! are they there still?

And as they go to church to-day, oh, do they think of me,

An' wonder where poor Katie is beyond the great blue sea?

An' well it is they cannot tell,—an' may they never know,

For sure 'twould only break their hearts to hear my tale of woe !

My mother must be getting old, an' she was never strong,
But then her spirit was so bright, an' sweet her daily song,—
She sings no more about the house, but still she thinks of me,

An' wipes away the dropping tears for one she ne'er may see.

My father's bent with honest toil and trouble bravely borne,

But never has he had to bear a word or look of scorn,

An' never shall it come through me ; for all I have been wild,—

I'd rather die a thousand deaths than shame him in his child !

Oh yes, I have been sinful ; but some were more to blame,
Who never think because of that to hang their heads for shame.

Ah, well, I mustn't think of them, but of myself, and pray
That He will take away the sin who came on Christmas Day !

An' thank you for the letter, nurse, you say the ladies brought.

'Twas kind of them to think of me ; I thank them for the thought.

The print is easy read, but, oh, what would I give to see
Just one small scrap of writin' from the old home folks to me !

But, nurse, those bells seem tellin' of the better home above,
Where sin and sorrow cannot come, but all is peace an' love,

Where broken hearts are healed at last, an' darkness passed away,

An' He shall bid us welcome *home*, who came on Christmas Day !

THE NEW CRUSADE.

OH, sweet and clear the melody rang 'neath the Syrian
heaven,

The echoes of the sweetest song to mortals ever given :
Love and goodwill where warring hate had held rude sway
so long !

Oh, well might angels come to earth to sing that Christmas
song !

And once again that message came in sweet and solemn
tone ;

God spake in our humanity to win it for His own :

' Love God with all thy heart and soul, from selfish aims
set free,

And love thy neighbour as thyself, and as God loveth thee.'

Age after age has passed away since first that song had
birth ;

But scant response its message woke in our sin-blinded
earth.

Men missed its very heart of hearts, while yet its words
they sang,

While yet through wide cathedral aisles the sacred
accents rang.

But now methinks we hear anew the music loud and clear,
' Because your Father loveth you, love ye your brethren
here.'

That clarion call through church and hall rings o'er the
busy throng,

Sounding the knell to selfish greed in Love's immortal
song !

Oh, sitting in your palaces, where soft the sunlight falls
Through richest silken hangings on stately pictured walls,
Where 'mid your costly playthings the idle hours pass by,
Hear ye without a distant shout, a long and bitter cry ?
Hear ye the tramp of thousands in early morning chill,
Passing to weary hours of toil in workshop or in mill ?
Hear ye them ask from daily task a little time to spare,
A little leisure to enjoy what God hath made so fair ?

'Twould mar your costly banquets, bedecked with rarest
flowers,
While strains of sweetest music float soft 'mid fairy bowers,
To look into the dreary dens, where 'mid the gathering
gloom,
Your brothers herd like folded sheep in each close, squalid
room ;—
To see where in dark alleys, all foul with mire and dust,
Starved children, pining women, toil to earn a scanty
crust ;
To hear the saddest moan of all, when men have vainly
pled
For roughest toil and poorest, to earn the daily bread !
Wake, dreamers, from your slumbers on silken couch of
ease !
'Tis yours to drive these spectres forth, and fouler fiends
than these ;
If Christ ye call your Lord and King, He owneth those
alone
Who seek to hold a brother's good as sacred as their own !
And still those heavenly notes are heard, yet sweeter and
more clear,
Drowning the strain of wrong and pain, and unbelief's
cold sneer.
One star shines bright through darkest night, for waiting
eyes to see ;
The anthem of the New Crusade the angels' song shall be !

A THANKSGIVING HYMN.

FOR the gladness of the sunshine,
For the dropping of the rain,
For the springtide's bloom of promise,
For the autumn's golden grain,
For the beauty of the forest,
For the fatness of the field,
For the orchard's rosy fruitage,
For the vineyard's luscious yield,
We thank Thee, O Lord !

For the nobler, richer beauty,
For the light that spirits know,
For the sacredness of duty
Guiding us through life below,
For our earthly ties so precious,
For the fireside warm and bright,
For the faith that through the darkness
Leads us to immortal light,
We thank Thee, O Lord !

For the drought that parched and withered,
For the blast that bared the bough,
For the clouds concealing blessings
That we may not measure now,
For our gladness and our sorrow,
For our poverty and wealth,
For our getting and our losing,
For our sickness and our health,
We thank Thee, O Lord !

For the losses and the crosses
Coming sore against our will ;
From *Thy* hand each good gift cometh,
And, not less, the seeming ill.
What Thou givest in Thy wisdom,
That alone to us is blest,
And of all Thy countless givings,
For Thy boundless *love*, the best,
We thank Thee, O Lord !

THE WIDOW'S LAST HOME.

A PICTURE FROM LIFE.

WHILE ye boast your barns o'erflowing
With the fulness of the year,—
While ye paint, in pictures glowing,—
Happy homes, and boundless cheer,—

Look at this one ; see how dreary
Yon small cell, whitewashed and bare,
Where a woman, worn and weary,
Sits,—a guiltless prisoner there !

Faint the sunset's golden glamour
Falls athwart the grated bars,—
Set so high,—the lonely dreamer
Nought beholds, save clouds and stars :—
Yet the dweller in the shadow
There another vision sees,—
Woodlands green, and daisied meadow,
And a farm-house, 'mid the trees.

Soft the evening dew's are falling,
As the cows come,—one by one,—
Summoned by her kindly calling
To the bars,—at set of sun :—
There they stand,—sleek, gentle creatures,
Waiting for the hand they know,—
And the milker wears *her* features
As in days of long ago !

Now, the snowy streams are flowing
Fast into the frothing pail,—
Now—the cows,—released, are going
To their pasture in the vale ;
Then the calves, with baby bleatings,
Press about her as she goes,
And the hens, with noisy greetings,
Scramble for the corn she throws.

Now the house-dog's joyous baying
Greets his master home once more,—
From the sowing or the haying—
Glad the day's long toil is o'er.
Then—the doorstep chat at even,—
Till the toilers seek their rest,—
Ere the sunset dyes of heaven
Vanish from the glowing west.

Ah ! how bitter the awaking
To the narrow, white-washed cell,
Where,—with sad heart slowly breaking,—
She must, like a felon, dwell !
Vanished all the dear home-pleasures,—
Vanished all the dear home-life,—
Nought is left, of all her treasures,
For the busy farmer's wife ;—

All her years of patient labour
Leave her but the prison-fare ;—
Not a single kindly neighbour
Can her daily portion share !
Boast ye, then, your barns o'erflowing,—
Happy homes and boundless cheer ;
But, amid your pictures glowing,
Let the widow's cell appear !

Yet, methinks, where ' many mansions '
Rise beyond the boundless blue,—
There, 'mid faithful toilers, resting,—
She shall find a ' mansion,' too !
She shall meet the loving welcome
Mortals could not here afford,—
' Enter,—good and faithful servant,—
' To the gladness of your Lord !'

We have hard words for the savage,
Who with bow-string sharp and sure,
Ends for aye the heavy burdens
Worn out toilers must endure !
But who recks *their* silent anguish,
Or their misery can gauge,
Who in prison-cell must languish
For no crime, save helpless age ?

V.
SONNETS.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM
EWART GLADSTONE.

SANS peur et sans reproche ! Our Lion heart,
To whom we turn when other hopes betray,
When tyrant Might puts forth her power to slay
Young struggling Freedom, with her poisoned dart,
And Britain hath forgot the nobler part
She played as Freedom's champion, that proud day
She led a world to break one despot's sway,
And from her old traditions stands apart !
Milton hath gone, and Wordsworth, but through thee
Still rings *their* hate of tyranny defied,
Still breathes the voice 'whose sound was of the sea,'
And that one 'of the mountains ;' far and wide
Such echoes roll where'er true Britons be,
Or men for liberty have lived and died !

THE EMPEROR WILLIAM,
FIRST EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

HE filled his niche in history passing well,
And there his stalwart figure long shall stand,
The last of the old Kaisers,—simple, grand,
Staunch to his conscience, whatsoe'er befell,

Whether with firm imperial mien to quell
 Tumult and discord in the Fatherland,
 Or curb its foes with firm, unwavering hand,
 Making it *one*, through victory’s magic spell ;
 His care alone to win his people’s weal ;
 His trust in Him who all events controls.
 It was not his young Freedom’s pulse to feel,
 Or gauge the impulses of widening souls ;—
We seem to see the dawn of morning light ;
He followed one clear star through storm and night !

‘ UNSER FRITZ. ’

WE looked for tidings of thee, day by day ;
 The whole world watched with awe the stress and strain
 Of mortal combat with disease and pain,
 Wondering to see thy strong will hold at bay
 The stern, dark power that seized thee for his prey,
 While in his shadow, still, thy heart was fain
 To set on throne secure the happy reign
 Of Peace and Freedom in thy land for aye.
 Through many a suffering day and sleepless night
 Unhasting and unresting was thy toil
 For purer victory and nobler spoil
 Than wins the blood-stained sword in deadly fight.
 In mould heroic, in thine aims divine,
 We hold thee crown of all thine ancient line !

CAPE ETERNITY.

ON THE SAGUENAY.

THOU weather-beaten warder, grim and gray,
 Towering majestic towards the glittering Plough,
 O’er all the thronging hills that seem to bow
 In humble homage to thy sovereign sway ;

Ev'n thy great consort waits her meed to pay
 In her calm grandeur, scarce less grand than thou,
 Raising aloft—star-crowned—thy regal brow,
 Sublime in lonely might and majesty !
 Thy rugged, storm-crowned forehead to the blast
 Thou barest—all unscreened thy Titan form,
 Radiant in sunset, dark in winter storm.
 So thou hast stood through countless ages past !
 What comes or goes—it matters not to thee—
 Serene, self-poised, in triple unity !

ASSOCIATION.

SUCH fragrance lingers round these ancient books,
 As breathes the scent from rose-leaves laid away,
 Dear memories of old familiar looks,
 Smiles on beloved faces wont to play,
 In which we caught the light of truth divine,
 Breaking upon us like a sudden ray
 Of light from realms where light doth always shine,
 And tones whose echoes long have died away.

These add their music to the poet's lays,
 Their beauty to the beauty of their dream,
 Shedding the grace of long-departed days
 O'er those that paler now and poorer seem—
 Memories that round our inmost hearts entwine,
 Breathing their sweetness through each well-known line !

THE HAREBELL AND THE CATARACT.

AT RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP.

WHERE the great thundering cataract tosses high
 Its crest of snow, 'mid thunders deep and dread,
 A tiny harebell from its mossy bed
 Smiles softly blue to the clear summer sky ;

And the great roaring flood that rages by
In sheets of foam, o'er the gray rocks outspread,
But sheds a tender dew upon its head,
And feeds the freshness of its purity !
So, seeking heaven, 'mid this rude earth of ours,
Some dwell in safety, through the roar and din
Of human passion, as in sheltered bowers,
Growing in beauty 'mid turmoil and sin,
Keeping the hue of heaven like the flowers
Because they keep the soul of heaven within !

ROBERT BROWNING.

DECEMBER 12, 1889.

SOFT falls the snow upon the fading year
As death falls softly on the quiet face
By which we fain would stand, a little space,
To drop the silent tribute of a tear,
And lay the laurel-wreath upon the bier
Where sleeps in peace—as if in love's embrace—
He who so long hath held so lofty place—
Our crownèd singer, our belovèd seer,
Who kept his faith undimmed in faithless days,
Whose witness for the right was stern and strong,
Whose life was true and earnest as his song—
Whose love was noble as his poet's bays.
What meed for him whose working-day is done ?
Rest with his love, and joy eternal won !

THE WHITE CITY.

A REMINISCENCE, SEPTEMBER, 1893.

I.

THROUGH the light drift of soft September haze,
What dream of beauty meets the wondering sight ?
See dome and colonnade, and palace white
Shine forth resplendent in the early rays
That touch with glory all the wondrous maze
Of this enchanted vision of delight,
Robed in a world's magnificence and might,
And wearing as a crown the nations' praise !
While statues, mirrored in the tranquil tide,
Gleam out on arch and frieze ; clear fountains play,
Soft plashing through the sultriness of noon,
Wreathing their rainbow-tinted sheaves of spray,
While swift the gondolas to music glide,
And swans sail stately o'er the still lagoon.

II.

What wondrous city this of heavenly birth ?
What mystic workers raised these gleaming walls ?
Who dwell serenely in these palace halls ?
Whence was the gleaming vision conjured forth ?
What costly treasure is the casket's worth ?
All day, methinks, the golden statue calls
Amid the splash of mimic waterfalls,
And sounds of many voices' praise and mirth.
'There are the haunts of Peace,' she seems to say.
'Such trophies Brotherhood alone may bring.
Here dwell the handmaids of our outward life,
With flowers and gems of beauty glistening, —
The hope and promise of a fairer day
That brings earth love for hate and peace for strife !'

III.

Even so—behold another city shine,
For eyes that see—beyond the mists that rise
From earthly moor and fen, and hide the skies ;—
The city robed in righteousness divine.
Whose gates with pearl and walls with gems are fine,
Whose dwellers are the loving and the wise,
Loving, because they see with clearer eyes
The light that even darkness may enshrine !
Even so, methinks, we see that city fair
Shining for faith beyond the shades of death,
Whose citizens know neither pain nor care,
Where neither sin nor sorrow entereth ;
Even so, methinks, that city may be born,
Out of the mists of an eternal morn !

PRESENT-DAY SONNETS.

SCYLLA.

GOD hath His martyrs still, in very deed,
Though rack and stake and headsman are forgot ;—
And ofttimes he by whom the truth is sought,
Who dares appeal from old tradition's creed
To truth Divine, though pure in life and deed,
Must be prepared for furnace seven times hot
Of bitter words, and harsh and hasty thought !
Not yet our faith from tyranny is freed,
For she who on the seven hills sat so long
Hath cruel words as sharp as sword or flame.
Oh, when we think of all the bitter wrong
That hath been done in pure religion's name,
Well may we long for that thrice blessed day
When 'all their idols' shall be swept away !

CHARYBDIS.

Still, as through Eden rings the tempter's cry,
 Yea—hath God said, Is there one only way
 To light and truth? We boldly answer, Nay!
 Faith is a vanished dream, so let it die;
 Come forth and gather knowledge.—How? and why?
 Leave faith to fighting bigots? Fact, we say,
 Must be our guide of life from day to day.
 Then sleep we well, when down at last we lie!
 We but believe what we can see and know,
 Where science guides us not we may not pass;
 No touch Divine to heal our sin and woe;
 No light from heaven to fall upon the grass
 That hides our dearest,—all we dare to say
 Is but, We live, and dream, and pass away!

FIDES.

To which we answer—Faith can never die,
 So on eternal love she keep her hold!
 We venture not to sound the depths that hold
 A fuller knowledge from the straining eye.
 Enough that to our hearts *He* makes reply,
 Who *is* our faith.—No creed of human mould,
 All clamped with human logic, hard and cold,
 But *He*, for ever living, ever nigh,
 The ONE—One only real—'mid shifting dreams,
 All true, all loving, undefiled by sin.
 Your boasted knowledge is but of what seems,
He liveth evermore our hearts within;
 Our Guide to life hereafter—here our Stay,
 Himself our Faith—the Life, the Truth, the Way!

THE CIRCLING YEAR.

JANUARY.

THE soft blue arch of turquoise, crystal clear,
Curves o'er white hills and rivers' frozen flow,
Draped in a virgin robe of dazzling snow
That veils the silent landscape far and near,
Swathing the withered herbage brown and sere,
And the tall dusky pines that—sweeping low
Their long dark branches—violet shadows throw
Across the stainless marble of the mere.

Hark ! through the stillness break the glad sleigh-bells
In silvery cadence through the frosty air ;
Of happy hearts their merry music tells ;—
Of glad home-comings—meetings everywhere ;
But late we owned the sway of Christmas spells ;
Now New Year chimes ring out the call to prayer !

FEBRUARY.

A world of whirling whiteness hides the sun ;
Fierce biting blasts in sweeping eddies go,
Massed cohorts of the Spirit of the snow,
Effacing a whole world, as Goth and Hun
Devoured the brightness of an earlier one ;
So these wild forces whelm and overthrow
All Nature's fairer life, engulfed below,
Till we begin to fear a world undone !

But lo ! the strife is stilled ; the sunbeams break
Through the dense clouds, with softer airs—to bring
Visions of greening meads, that soon shall make
Sweet fantasies of bud and blossoming,
And sunny nooks, where the first snowdrops wake
In welcome promise of the gladsome spring !

MARCH.

O bright impetuous March—thou changeful child
Of bleak north winds, and gales from southern seas !
We dread thy blustering storms that rend and freeze ;
Yet sudden stills the tempest's wailing wild
Before thy softening mood—as April mild !
Warm brooding sunshine, from the budding trees
Spreads floating fragrance on the wandering breeze,
And melts the solid ice and snow-wreaths piled.

Fast runs the sap and high the torrent swells
Beneath the subtle influence that seems
Wafted from waking woods and violet dells,
Breathing of bursting buds and rushing streams,
And sheltered nooks, where spring already dwells,
While winter dies amid sweet vernal dreams !

APRIL.

Hail ! gentle nurse of opening buds and flowers ;
Thy weeping skies we love ;—thy balmy breath
A thousand happy fancies whispereth ;
Visions of May shine through thy kindly showers :—
Dreams of white blossoming trees and leafy bowers ;
The woods awake from Nature's seeming death ;
' Winter is past and gone '—their fragrance saith,
While gleeful birds salute the balmy hours.

Fair, tender blossoms smile brown leaves between,—
Pale liverwort and blood-root's stainless white ;
The shad-bush rears its plumes of snowy sheen ;
The shrilling blue-bird flashes azure light
Athwart the brake just touched with tender green,
And robins flute their carols of delight !

MAY.

Wreathed in soft mists and bathed in dewy sheen,
Smiling through tears,—with brooding tender face,
Our May month comes ; and straight with airy grace
Each twig unfurls its tufts of shining green ;
Soft clouds of verdure break the blue serene ;
Vague wandering fragrance fills each bowery place
From snowy clustering blossoms that embrace
The half-fledged boughs which late so bare had been.

In the soft shadows of the forest-brake
White lily-cups pour forth their incense rare ;
And dewy violets and white May flowers make
A blended sweetness on the balmy air,
Whose charmèd stillness joyous bird-notes wake,
And light and joy and hope are everywhere !

JUNE.

Through interlacing boughs—a leafy screen,
Golden in sunlight, green where shadows fall ;
Between gray, ancient boles, wide-girthed and tall,
That skywards rise with calm majestic mien,
Looks the red morning sun, and pours between
Their crowns of foliage, golden arrows small
Against the tender leaflets' living wall,
Whence comes the robin's liquid call serene.

The air is filled with love-notes mingling sweet
Of happy feathered mates that haunt the dell ;
The humming-bird whirs by on pinion fleet
To drain the honey from the lilybell ;
Wild-rose and hawthorn weave their garlands, meet
To grace the happy month we love so well !

JULY.

Hail ! glorious month, when Nature, festal-bright,
With roses wreathed and crowned, holds festival,
'Mid honeysuckle bowers, and lilies tall
Pouring lush fragrance from their censers white ;
And bramble-vines, tempting both sense and sight,
Hang forth their berries bright on rock and wall :
Joyous the feathered tribe their nestlings call,
And warble forth in song their full delight.

The soft rich sunsets fade in moonlight gleams,
Where sparkling floods of molten silver flow,
Impetuous with the rush of mountain streams,
Or sleeping on the placid lake below—
A mystic glamour of enchanted dreams,
Where fairy-worlds of beauty shine and glow !

AUGUST.

So calm, so bright, so still—fair August days !
Now lulled to rest, amid her ripened seeds,
The year seems musing o'er her earlier deeds,
While here and there a few soft parting lays
Of lingering birds are heard,—the water-ways
Are stirless, save for swaying of the reeds,
And tremulous movements of the water-weeds,
And water-lilies set in quiet bays.

Then dragon-flies on silver pinions sweep,
The shrill cicada drones her drowsy chime ;
Nature, like a tired gleaner, falls asleep
Amid the golden grain's rich harvest-prime,
Beneath the brooding heat that seems to steep
Earth, air and sky in some soft southern clime !

SEPTEMBER.

Most changeful of the months—September—thou
Comest, the last of all the summer train ;
Cheating us ever with illusions vain !
Thou dost out-April April—dreaming now,
With summer sunshine on thy pensive brow,
Then, changing swift, to drive, with loosened rein
Wild winds and sobbing storm-gusts o'er the plain,
And toss the yellowing leaves from writhing bough.

Is it the symbol of thine own regret
For early closing days and dying flowers ?
Well might we deem thine eyes with tears are wet
For all the lost delights of summer hours
That pass so swiftly from our sight—and yet
A thought of spring shines through September showers !

OCTOBER.

She drives the snowy clouds o'er azure skies,
Chasing each other in their playful flight ;—
A spirit full of buoyant life and light :
Tearing aside fair Nature's summer guise ;
Tossing the dying leaflet as it flies ;
Waking the storm cloud's desolating might ;
Loosing the frost-king's chilling silent blight.
Then swiftly the enchanter's part she tries ;—

From wood and lea a myriad hues outpour,
Crimson and gold and Tyrian purple glow ;
A rainbow-tinted woodland, from the shore,
Makes a new rainbow in the stream below,
'Neath rose and amber sunsets. Then once more
Comes change, and driving rain, and wild winds blow !

NOVEMBER.

The children wade amid the sodden leaves,
So lately glistening green in summer breeze,
Now dropping slowly from the bare brown trees,
That stretch gaunt arms about the cottage eaves.
Stripped are the orchards ; gathered in the sheaves ;
The wildfowl quits her haunts for southern seas
Ere touched by silent frost the streamlets freeze,
And winter's craft her icy mantle weaves !

About the woods there breathes the mystic spell
That speaks of vanished beauty—lost delight ;
The last belated robin flutes farewell ;
The sun, 'mid dun and purple, sinks from sight ;
While the wild winds and rain-gusts rise and swell
To wrap the world in storm and wintry night !

DECEMBER.

Darkest and dreariest of the monthly train,
December—gray with snow-clouds, rising pale
Against the dull horizon ! Sharp the gale
Howls 'mid the leafless woods its wild refrain.
Thy magic touch encrusts the window-pane
With many a fairy landscape—hill and dale,—
Steeps crowned with pines and ferns in icy mail ;
A lifeless dream of summer's vanished reign !

But yet against thy dreariness we set
Warm gleams from household firesides—bright and
clear,
Where loving hearts in happy groups have met
Around the bounteous board of Yule-tide cheer.
The Christmas stars are beaming brightly yet ;
We bless the Old and wait the glad New Year !

BEYOND THE DARKNESS.

EARTH's fairest scene,—the farewell of the day
 Our eyes still follow sadly,—though so oft,—
 The rose and purple hues, commingling soft,—
 So rich,—so bright,—so swift to pass away !
 But yet we know the darkness will not stay,
 And so, with hopeful hearts we sink to rest,
 And sleep comes gently to the wearied breast,
 Till darkness pass to dawn, and morning gray
 And then to full clear daylight ;—so we pray
 To Him who made the darkness and the light,—
 Whom Nature's myriad forces all obey ;—
 ' Grant us the faith to look beyond death's night,
 Teach us *that* darkness, too, shall pass away,
 Help us to look, with faith's unerring sight,
 To where, beyond the darkness, there is day !'

THE CALL OF THE CENTURY.

(TO CANADA.)

A CENTURY dies ! Lo ! a new century springs
 To new and nobler life that yet shall be ;—
 And thou, our country, young and strong and free—
 Must rise to meet the future that it brings !
 For thee the prophet dreams, the minstrel sings
 Thine heirship of imperial destiny,—
 To wield, in righteousness, from sea to sea,
 The sceptre of imperial ocean kings !
 Arise ! take up the burden of thy prime ;—
 Leave childish things behind, with childhood's years,—
 All lapses from the noble thought and deed,—
 All petty strifes that marred thy growing time !—
 Thy people one in heart—leave feuds and fears,—
 Stand forth to take thy place, by Heaven decreed !

A FAREWELL GREETING TO LORD AND LADY ABERDEEN ON THEIR LEAVING CANADA.

You leave us—whom our hearts have learned to love,
For the dear land that some of us love well,
Where many a 'bonnie brae' and rocky fell,
And 'burnie,' wimpling through the leafy dell,
And mist-crowned heathery hills that tower above
The shadows brooding o'er the purple glen,
Unite their spells to win you home again.

Yet will you cast some wistful looks behind
On our fair forest-land, whose hills and streams
And rainbow-tinted woods, where autumn dreams,
Reflect for you the sunset's parting beams,—
A farewell vision meet for eyes so kind!
Long may they haunt you with their memory sweet,
And lure to us again your wandering feet!

Fain had we kept you with us many a day;
For Canada hath need of such as you
To mould her growing life, still crude and new,
To high ideals, with a vision true.

Yet, since you go, we speed you on your way
With loving thoughts—for there are ties that bide
Though distance stretch between and seas divide!

We hold you by the living bond that lies
Deep hidden in the heart—our being's core,—
Stretching invisible from shore to shore,
Unmoved though winds may rave and billows roar—
The bond that seals our kinship with the skies—
The Father's service, through the children's need—
In that enduring bond we cry 'God speed!'

THE MOTHER-QUEEN.

OH day of pain and woe! oh, flags, droop low,—
Toll slowly, passing bell,
An Empire mourns, with reverent, low-bowed head,
A weeping people whisper—'She is dead—
Our Queen—we loved so well!'

A solemn hush o'er the great city broods,
Fit emblem of the shadowing grief that weaves
So dark a cloud o'er Britain's fields and woods,
O'er sea-girt isles, and forest solitudes,
While, with one throb of grief, an Empire heaves !

The long years vanish, while the people gaze
Across the ages gone, with tear-filled eyes ;—
Recall the fair girl-Queen of early days,—
The pure, sweet life that won a world to praise,—
The 'Sovereign Lady,' pure and good and wise.

Victoria ! with their daily lives entwined,
They held the Empire's centre, symbol, heart,
'Her people,' in her inmost soul enshrined,
Her aim—to seek their 'lasting good,' and find
Herself of every heart and home a part.

Her name was music to the exile's ear,
A breath of home and country in it lay ;—
A watchword for the rally and the cheer
Where Britons fought for flag and country dear,
Or forced the wilderness to own her sway.

When sorrow darkened life, and power seemed vain,
Her loyal heart still wrought its high behest,
Her people's weal,—and sympathy with pain,
Till love and grief had wrought a twofold chain,
And in a Mother-Queen her people blessed.

So the years moulded her to grace serene,
Made her age dearer than her youth could be ;
A world-wide Empire's prayer—'God Save the Queen,'
Still rose to Him by whose grace she hath been
Her people's glory—three score years and three !

Now He hath called her to the nobler life
Beyond the 'chance and change' of this, below,
Where the long-parted husband meets the wife,
The mother meets the child, and pain and strife
Are lost in tides of love that ever flow.

Yet may her sorrowing people—left behind,
The son who fills to-day her vacant throne,
Inspired by her high soul, her centre find,
Love for her God, her country and mankind,
The greatness that to-day the nations own !

The flags droop low, the minute guns boom slow,
The winds her requiem sing ;
An Empire's fleet salutes the honoured dead,
A nation mourns with reverent, low-bowed head,
Yet prays—' *God save the King !*'

VI.
THE WINGED VICTORY.
A DRAMATIC POEM.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The high bank of a river, commanding an extensive and charming view of wood and water, interspersed with meadow and upland. CLARA and GERTRUDE conversing.*

CLARA.

Come to our cliff-seat, Gertrude, for a while ;
Too lovely is the day to lose an hour,
Half sweet, half sad, while summer lingers thus,
As if she scarce could bear to say farewell,—
Fondling so gently, with such tender grace,
The flowers she nursed to beauty, loath to leave
Her darlings to the sharp, rude, autumn frosts,
That snap their tender lives when she is gone !
Come to our niche, deep carven in the rock
By Nature's silent sappers, long ago,
Where we so oft have watched the golden day
Sink amid purple evening's gorgeous folds
Of rose and violet, softly blent above,—
Still softer in the placid tide below—
A sea of glass mixed with celestial fire.
Those were sweet summer evenings when we still
Had many days together. *Now* the few

Of you and summer left are dearer still.
I prize each hour as misers count their gold !

GERTRUDE.

Yes, dear, 'tis beautiful indeed ! See how
The calm, majestic river seems to woo
The rocky beach with such a gentle tide—
Such light, soft lapping, that the tiniest brook
Could scarce be gentler. Far away it sweeps,
Pure as the blue above, 'mid shadowy hills,
That seem to blend the hues of sky and stream.
And there, in front, the river's bright expanse
Lies quivering like a stretch of purple sea,
In which are woven ever new designs
O'er ground of softest violet, while the mass
Of woods shows touches of autumnal gold.
'Tis all so fair, and yet so subtly sad !
Ah me ! when far away, how oft the scene
Shall greet mine inward vision, just as fair
As now it lies before mine outward gaze !
Close twined it is with golden memories
Of youth and holiday. How oft our feet
In childish, aimless straying here and there
Have threaded those cool, hemlock-shaded ways,
Or forced our way through tangles of young beech,
Where the shy, frightened partridge startled us,
Swift whirring past us with her tender brood !
How oft we waded in those limpid waves
That glide o'er golden sand in yonder bay ;
Or played at hiding in those wave-worn caves,
Crusted with lichen and soft velvet moss,
Round which we wove our fairy-tales of gnomes
And elfin creatures finding shelter there
From all the bustling world that loved them not !
We !—I should say *you*, Clara, for 'twas you,
You always who invented ;—I enjoyed,
Just putting in a fancy here and there,
Which Philip wove so deftly into verse,
And read them to us, silent in amaze
That they in this new dress should seem so grand !

CLARA.

Ah, Gertrude ! those were blessed days for us !
 Scarce can I keep back tears while I recall
 Their sweet, unconscious joy and budding hope
 And trust in all things holy,—and in Him
 Who, as our Father, seemed so close and near
 And full of love,—even as the earthly one
 Who cherished my young girlhood till he passed
 To better life than ours, in that *beyond*,
 Whither I oft have longed to follow him !

GERTRUDE.

My Clara ! Such faint heart is not for one
 Who has, I trust, a long day's work to do
 Ere it is time to rest ! Yet 'tis not strange,
 For dear to me your father's memory is
 As that of one 'twas blessing just to *know*,—
 Whose loving presence was the crowning grace
 That hallowed all the beauty here for me !
 How much he taught us of that higher love
 But dimly outlined through the misty veil
 That men call Nature, often hiding more,—
 Far more than it reveals ; while through our souls
 So often God speaks clear ! Your father's life,
 So penetrated with the love divine,
 First drew me towards the Source of Love itself,
 That ever since has been to me the spring
 Of all true joy, true work, true life, true hope,
 Still strengthening as the days and years went by !

CLARA.

Would I could say as much ! But many a cloud
 Has passed between that sun of life and me
 Since first it shone in childhood's happy days,
 As still it shines at times, and *then*,—indeed,
 My only wonder is—'tis ever lost !

GERTRUDE.

And Philip !—what of *him* ? I heard that he

Was ranked by some with those who cast aside
Faith's mystic light, and walk by sight alone !

CLARA.

I cannot say, but soon perchance may know.
Our paths have lain for years so far apart,
For I have led a quiet, home-bound life,
While he has wandered far by land and sea ;
And little have I heard of him of late,
Save from your Ernest ;—how they chanced to meet,
And that he said he might be with us soon.—
And though I long for this,—almost I dread
To hear again the old familiar tone,
Stirring old founts of feeling, and perchance
With words that pain my inmost soul to hear !
For bitter 'tis to hear a voice you love
Give utterance to thoughts that wound and grieve ;—
And I have loved him since I knew myself,
Or what love was ! You well remember, dear,
What to my lonely childhood he became,—
The orphan cousin whom my father took
Into his home and heart,—my playmate, guide,
Who, like an elder brother, ever near,
Helped me in all small straits, all childish needs,
At lessons or at play ; teased me for whims,
Made me his happy comrade, told me tales
That fired his boyish fancy ;—for you know
What gift he had of fancies and of words,
'To give them apt expression. You know, too,
How many things he showed us—that our eyes
Had scarcely seen without him,—orioles' nests,
The homes of squirrels, strange wild undergrowths,
The Indian pipe,—so waxen white and pure,
Though growing mid the muck of sodden leaves ;—
The ruby moss-cups, downy chrysalis,
The tiny tree-frog's human mimicry,
The humming-bird's small nest on beechen bough ;—
How much it seemed to us he knew ! And then
What kindly sympathy he ever felt
With all the humbler lives of bird and beast,

Holding some friendly converse with all those
That make a living nature for us here.

GERTRUDE.

Yes ; Philip was to me, scarce less than you,
A loved and trusted brother. Nay, even now
I can recall some lurking jealousy
When he would always bring *you* the first flower,
Or call you first when he would have us see
Some of his woodland wonders. For I craved
For love ! more love ! I could not be content,
And knew not then that giving was more blest
Than gathering even this best fruit of life ;—
Since *giving* lifts us up to heaven itself !
And by degrees I came to see how right
It was that you should be the first with him,
As with the rest,—my Clara, fair and bright,
Always my fancy's princess,—for I knew
How you were gifted far beyond myself,
And all whom then I knew. I wondered oft,
When you and Philip wove your stories, why
Such fancies came to you and not to me ;
Yet I could always love you and admire !

CLARA.

Oh, Gertrude ! and I always revered you ;
And so did Philip,—for your gentleness
Seemed to my more impetuous, hasty self
Like some sweet heavenly spell. Against my will
It oft subdued me, for I felt your soul
Had more of heaven in it—far more than mine,
That revelled in the beauty of the world,
And could not bear, in youth's warm flush and glow
To think such joys could not endure for aye.
And still to me, though somewhat wiser grown,
That thought will come, like sombre funeral knell
That glooms the banquet ! Nay ! perchance I feel
Far more than then,—the awful mystery
That underlies the painted screen of life.
'Twas Philip first unveiled it, when he read,

From books he studied, of the Absolute,
 Unconscious being, through long ages born
 To wake to consciousness in us at last !
 Such paths too arduous are for human feet,
 Leading to rarer air than I could breathe ;
 And groping 'mid those heights, I lost my way,—
 The way that leads straight from the heart to God,
 And heaven, and faith, and hope, and love divine ;
 But all were swallowed up for me in mystery !
 That time was sadder far than words can tell ;
 Yet, through the voiceless solitude, I held,
 Somehow, half blindly, to the clue they put
 Into my childish hands :—the simple prayer,
 The daily reading of the words divine
 That fall on our parched souls like morning dew,
 Watering our souls' roots, reaching our real selves,
 Guiding their growth still upward to the light
 Through all the fogs that pride and passion raise !

GERTRUDE.

Thank God for that, dear Clara ! You did well
 Amid the darkness not to lose your hold
 On the one thread that guides us safely through
 A maze defying keenest human thought ;—
 Weakness admitted here is truest strength !
 But see how yonder sails reflect the sun.
 That boat seems wafted from enchanted lands,
 Gliding, swan-like, across the distant blue.
 Her course tends hitherward, it seems to me.

CLARA.

Perchance it might be Philip ! Ernest said
 He might be here, ere long, and,—strange it seems,—
 Almost I dread that meeting, long desired !
 Will he be other than he was of old ?
 If not, shall I be strong enough to meet
 The weapons he was wont to wield so well,
 And, keenest of them all, the old home-love
 That makes us weakest where we would be strong ?

GERTRUDE.

Fear not, dear friend ; you shall not stand alone,
But strong in ever-conquering strength divine !

CLARA.

Yes, dear, I think 'tis he. I almost seem
The old familiar figure to discern,
Even at this distance, through the spyglass. Look,
Can you not see him too ? Come, let us take
The winding path that leads down to the beach,
And greet the wanderer as he steps ashore !

GERTRUDE.

Go you alone, dear ! It is better so ;
After so long a parting, you should meet
With no intruder on your mutual joy.
I was but little to him, you so much,
That I at such a time were out of place.
Let me stay here alone and pray for you.

*CLARA goes ; and GERTRUDE remains alone
while from the water comes the sound of voices
singing in the distance.*

Soft the sunset hues are glowing
Over wood and lea,
And the purple river, flowing
Onward to the sea.
Bright the evening star is gleaming
In the golden west,
While with wistful, hopeful dreaming,
Swells the wanderer's breast !

See, his rose-flushed sails are speeding
Homewards from afar ;
Still before him, calmly leading,
Shines the evening star.
Waft him on ! There wait to meet him
Friends the true and tried ;
Love unfolds her arms to greet him
Home,—at eventide !

SCENE II.—*Moonlight. Terrace in front of country-house.*

PHILIP, CLARA, and GERTRUDE conversing.

PHILIP.

Well, it is pleasant to be here again !
All is so dear and home-like—nay, 'tis home,
As no place else could e'er be home to me.
I seem a boy again ! My wanderings all
Seem blotted out as if they ne'er had been.
Youth holds me still ! The intervening years
Are nothing, surely, but a tangled dream.
That fringe of silver breaking on the shore
Of yonder bay ;—that band of quivering sheen
Yon boat is crossing now ;—it seems to me
That last I saw it only yesternight.
Scarce longer seems it since we roamed,—we three,—
Through yonder distant wood, and found such store
Of nuts, we could not carry home the half ;
And Gertrude, with those tender, pleading eyes
I never could resist, begged we should leave
The greater portion of our gathered spoil
To swell the busy squirrel's harvest-home !

GERTRUDE (*smiling*).

Your memory is good ; *mine* scarcely kept
That incident, but I remember well
One day you went on a long fishing cruise,
And storm and wind and darkness followed fast,
And we poor children wandered up and down
Along the cliff, and scanned the tossing wave,
And wrung our hands, and wept because we feared
Your little boat might founder in the storm,
And we should never see your face again !

PHILIP

Indeed ! I never knew I was so prized,
Or that my peril caused so much alarm.

GERTRUDE.

Oh no ! We would not for the world have told,—
When you returned, flushed with adventurous pride,
Scorning the thought of danger ; for we feared
That you would laugh at us for foolish fears—
So Clara urged, at least. I rather think
That I was less ambitious ; yet I did
Too much desire the praise of those I loved !

PHILIP (*turning towards her*).

And was I one of these, in that old time ?

GERTRUDE (*smiling*).

You were, and are so still. Our childhood's friends
We never can forget, or cease to love,
As part of what now seem the happiest days,
Looked at through softening haze of memory.

CLARA (*half reproachfully*).

I scarcely should have thought that even *those*
You *now* could call your happiest days, dear friend !

GERTRUDE.

Ah ! know you not ? It never is the present
That fairest to us seems ! Future or past
Smiles brightest to our gaze. To *me* the past
Seems bathed in loveliest hues of Paradise.
I never could look forward much, but dwell
With lingering love upon the cherished past.
Yes, we so often see the pictured past
And future, too, through the soft mellowing haze
Of our own minds' creating ! As that scene,
Bathed in the moonlight, wears such witching grace,—
Scarce can we realize that 'tis the same
Familiar landscape,—rocks and shore and stream,
That, seen by daylight,—this weird glamour lose,—
And wear a duller, more terrestrial guise.

CLARA.

And yet to *me*,—how lovely in *all* lights,
In all their varying phases dear to me ;
For each is hung about with memories
As those tall hawthorns with their dropping fruit.
But here comes Ernest, dear ; what will he say
To these fond lingering regrets of yours
For that old past wherein *he* had no share ?

ERNEST (*approaching*).

Ah, Philip ! I am glad to see you here,
Safe brought through all your roamings to the home
Of which so often I have heard you speak
With such affection !

PHILIP.

No less glad am I
To find you here amid my childhood's scenes.
It makes this meeting of dear friends complete !

ERNEST (*playfully*).

But as I came, methought I heard my name
Linked with such words as,—‘What will Ernest say ?’

GERTRUDE.

’Twas but some playful talk of Clara’s, dear,
Because I spoke of childhood’s happy days
As touched with glamour that none else might know ;
She thought that scarcely should be !

ERNEST (*smiling*).

Oh, I see—
And I suppose ’tis natural ; yet I know
My childhood does not look so bright to me ;
And I rejoice that,—led from strength to strength
In endless progress,—life shall brighter grow !

CLARA.

Then, Gertrude, happiest days are yet to come !

ERNEST.

I trust so, but I know how tenderly
Her heart clings to the past, and early friends ;
And, knowing what a wrench before her lies,
'Tis good to feel she has an unseen Friend
Stronger than I—to stay her weakness on.
Philip, I long to hear how you have fared
Since you set sail from our dear island shore.
I will return here shortly. Now, dear friends,
Will you spare to me Gertrude for a while ?
There are some things we must discuss at once.
Awaiting your decision,—Gertrude, dear.

ERNEST *and* GERTRUDE *walk some distance*
apart, and sit talking in low tones. PHILIP
and CLARA *also converse apart.*

PHILIP.

She scarcely seems to me like promised bride,
But rather vestal virgin, set apart
For some high task that fills her heart and soul,
And scarce leaves room for lesser human loves.

CLARA.

Nay, there you are mistaken, for her heart
Is full of love ; it is her very life
To love and to be loved. But life had been
Too sad for *her* without *best* love beyond !

PHILIP.

How true these words that we so often hear,
And heed so little—'Blest the pure in heart,
For they shall see God' ! Would that I were such !
And Gertrude seems to me more like to go
Into that nearer vision, which they say
Comes not to this gross mortal life of ours,
Than o'er wide seas to pass to isles remote,
To win rough savages to gentler ways.
I see with pain her thin, transparent hands,
That delicate, too lovely, wild-rose tint,

The dove-like eyes, too large and luminous—
And then—that frequent cough !

CLARA.

Oh, that's no more
Than she has had for years—no worse, I think !

PHILIP.

But years will tell, at last ! It seems to me
Her life hangs on a fine and slender thread.

CLARA.

Oh, Philip, say not that ! 'Tis hard enough
To part, without such auguries of ill.
Ernest is hopeful that the Southern clime
To which she goes, will prove a healing balm,
And nurse her fragile weakness back to strength.
'Tis *this* half reconciles me to her loss—
This—and the thought that she will happier be
Doing a noble work with one she loves,
To be her fellow-worker and her stay !

PHILIP.

Has she known Ernest long ?

CLARA.

Oh yes, for years ;
Before he first went to his lonely toil.
I think he loved her *then*, and that he sought
To win her for his wife. But in those days
She loved him not as one should love, to wed.
So, leaving home and friends, he went alone
To dwell amid those untamed savages.
There day by day her thoughts would follow him,
And, month by month, as the rare letters came,
Glimpsing his lonely, uncomplaining life
And perils that beset him there,—she seemed
To grow more silent, more absorbed in thought,
And love grew in the silence, till one day
We heard that Ernest shortly would return,

And she at last would marry him, and go
 To be his helper in that Southern isle,
 Wherein, but late, fierce savages devoured
 The helpless captives of the spear and bow.
 I knew the need was great—the work divine ;
 But yet I grudged our Gertrude, fairest, best,
 To waste her prime amid barbarians there,
 Trying to teach them things beyond their ken !
 But one day Ernest told the simple tale
 Of a young widow, helpless, in despair,
 Whom his hands rescued from the strangling cord
 That waited every wife when thus bereft ;
 And how his gentle words of Christian hope
 Had touched her heart and saved her from despair,
 And waked her soul to live for evermore ;
 And how his earnest pleadings had availed
 To end such cruel customs. *Then* indeed
 I dared to say no more, but since have sought
 To bid her God-speed, though with sorrowing heart,
 Too sure that we shall see her face no more
 On this side heaven. She seems too near it now !
 (*Breaks down, weeping.*)

PHILIP.

Nay, dearest Clara, it may not be thus ;
 But even were it so, you have your faith
 That death is but the gate of higher life,
 And you could grudge your friend no gain,—I know.

CLARA.

But you,—*you*, Philip, could you speak of ‘gain’
 Sincerely, as believing what you say ?

PHILIP.

I scarcely could have spoken thus, indeed,
 Had I not somewhat of that faith myself ;
 Not with such full, assured belief as you,
 With whom it is the growth of all your years,
 But in such measure as may come to one
 Who long has wrestled, through the night of doubt,

With all the powers of darkness, and has won
With pain, a foothold on the rock at last !

CLARA.

Oh, Philip, you have made me glad indeed !
But—think you—I myself have never known
What means that struggle to keep fast the hold
On that same rock ? Some day you'll tell me more
Of how the light at last dispelled the gloom !

PHILIP.

Some day I may ; it is a long, sad tale
Of struggle with the fearsome shapes of hell,
Unmeet to shadow such a night as this,
To which belong bright thoughts and heavenly dreams !

(After a brief silence.)

And see our lovers slowly strolling back ;
Mark how the moonlight lays on Gertrude's hair
An aureole ; methinks even now she seems
To wear the semblance of a sainted maid.
Poor Ernest ! Scarce I think he sees the truth.

GERTRUDE *(returned with ERNEST)*.

Dear Clara, Ernest fain would hear you sing,
Before we part,—this magic, moonlight eve,—
One of the songs that you have sung to me
At eventide, when we have sat alone.
One specially I fain would hear you sing ;
For Ernest, I am sure, would prize its tone
Of victory won at last o'er doubt and pain.

CLARA.

Almost too sad its theme for this fair night ;—
'Twere fitter for some sunset that gleams forth
In golden promise through the dropping rain !

GERTRUDE.

Nay, dear, the sadness but accents the joy,
As those deep shadows make those silver gleams
Brighter by far than if the whole were light !

PHILIP.

Yes, sing, dear friend. To hear your voice once more
Completes the charm that seems to make us live
Again in those bright days that are no more !

CLARA.

But this is scarcely like our songs of old,
That were as gleeful and as free from pain
As were the birds' sweet carols overhead ;
Yet better mates it with our graver thought.
So I will sing, for nothing Gertrude asks
In these last, precious days, could I refuse !

*Taking the mandolin brought to her by ERNEST,
she tunes it, and accompanies herself as she
sings.*

Weary,—so weary of living !—
Weary of sorrow and tears,
Weary of hopelessly looking
On through the long, lonely years !
Weary of conflict and darkness,
Weary of shadow and night,
Weary of looking and longing,
Wistfully watching for light !
Then comes the whisper of angels,
Breathing an exquisite calm :
' Lo, unto him that endureth
Cometh the crown and the palm.'
Then through the stillness of waiting
Hope lifts her resonant voice :
' Night shall endure but a moment ;
Soon thou shalt see, and rejoice !'
Light hath arisen in darkness,
Shining at last o'er the way ;
Joy in the hope of His glory,
Almost the breaking of day !
In the glad sense of His presence,
And in His promise secure,
Now in a blessed assurance,
Gladly the heart can endure !

SCENE III.—*A calm, misty morning; the sun just beginning to disperse the soft floating mists, and melt the rime on the grass. PHILIP and CLARA standing by the open window, looking out while they converse.*

CLARA.

It seems so soon to leave us ; but you have,
At least, a lovely morning for your ride.
How exquisitely soft those folds of mist
That veil the river's farther shore from view !
How mildly lustrous beams the morning sun,
Whose golden arrows pierce the rising fog,
And send it floating upwards, till at last
The white melts softly in the arching blue !
The pearly rime has almost left the grass,
Leaving it emerald.—Nature seems to smile,—
Like Faith,—through tears, as if she realized
How present loss prepares for spring-time gain !

PHILIP.

I see you have not lost your old delight
In reading parables from Nature's page.
Why should we not, indeed, when, as we trust,
All life is one, and Nature but a name
For that wise love that breathes through every form
Of life and beauty in the universe,
Which are but syllables of that great Name ?
Well, it is hard to leave you all so soon ;
I seem scarce to have seen you ! Much unsaid
I must leave now, in hope of swift return ;
For when this mission I have pledged myself
To carry promptly through, whene'er my steps
Should reach my native shore, has been discharged,
With all the speed I may, I'll hasten back
All the more gladly, since more confident
To find home friends unchanged—home love the same !
Before we met again, with sinking heart
I almost feared the moment of return,

Lest it should smite my fondest hopes with death ;
 And more to me it is than you can guess,
 To find you still the same true-hearted friend,
 Only full-ripened by the changing years !
 And Gertrude, too, still sweeter than the dream
 That often shone upon my darkest hours,
 Like angel visitant from higher spheres !
 I grieve with you to lose her presence here ;
 Yet I am glad for Ernest, for I know
 How,—in such isolation amid those
 Who are but children, at their very best,—
 The heart and mind grow hungry with desire
 For equal minds to mate with,—for the smile
 Of comprehending womanhood ! You know
 How strange our meeting on yon distant shore ;—
 How much he did for me, a sea-tossed waif,
 Nigh unto death ;—but *this* you cannot know !
 And warm and strong my admiration grew,
 The longer that I watched him at his work
 Amid the child-like savages, and saw
 How, day by day, he led them surely on
 Towards the ideal shadowed in himself,—
 The spiritual manhood of the race,
 Full-orbed in *One* to whom he drew me, too,
 Through my deep love and reverence for himself !

CLARA.

I hope to hear it all when you return.
 Strange how our web of life is interwoven,
 How thread is intertwined with thread, to make
 The fair design complete. Through all, dear friend,
 God guard you, bring you safely back to us !

PHILIP.

Farewell ! I trust it will not be for long.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A late autumn afternoon ; the sun breaking through clouds. CLARA, in deep mourning, greeting PHILIP on his return.*

PHILIP (*much moved*).

Dear Clara, well I understand your grief !
How strangely sorrow overtakes our joy !

CLARA.

Ah, Philip ! all too soon, the lurking ill
That you foretold for Gertrude, seized its prey. —
Scarce had you left us for one little week,
When, sudden, like a bolt from azure sky,
There came a messenger for our sweet friend,—
His errand pressing,—and she knew at once
That he had come to take her to the King,
And smiled, content to go ;—and even we,
To whom the shock came like a thunder-stroke
When a slight increase of the cough you marked,
Grew, through a fatal chill, until we saw
Death written surely on her marble face,—
As the end came sudden on us like a blow—
Even we, who forced back tears and signs of grief,
Lest they should break upon her perfect peace,
Could almost see the Shining Ones draw near ;—
Could almost hear the fluttering of their wings,
And strains of welcoming music from the gates
Of the eternal city of her dreams !
And such a sweetness, as of heavenly airs,
Filled the sick chamber, that it raised our souls
From thoughts of death and dull mortality,
To dreams of quiet waters,—pastures green,
And trees of life, with all their golden fruit,
And all sweet parables, whereby to us
Come gleams of bliss transcending human thought !
Even Ernest was so calm, so undismayed,

That he could bid her God-speed on her way
 To an abode, more fitting such a soul
 Than any that his fondest dreams had framed,
 Mid those fair isles that float on Southern seas.
 And when at last she lay in marble calm,—
 No lightest tremor ever to be stirred
 By voice most tender or by need most sore
 Of those she cherished with such faithful love ;—
 And yet scarce death it seemed, but quiet sleep !—
 Then did we look, dumb with a deep surprise
 And awe, on Ernest, for indeed he seemed
 Bathed in the light celestial that had burst
 Through portals opened to admit the Bride !
 Her perfect, blessed peace enfolded him
 As with a still caress, and made him strong,
 And changed the bitter loss to blessed gain,
 So strong and close her spirit held him still !
 And weeks have passed, and still that mystic peace
 Seems wrapped about him.—We had looked with dread
 For some reaction from the quietude
 We could not comprehend ;—but still he seems
 As one who sees what others do not see,
 And seeing so, is fully satisfied ;
 And still, with steadfast heart, prepares to go
 Back to his work alone—yet not alone,
 For even *my* half-seeing eyes can trace
 The brightness of the Presence by his side !

PHILIP.

I well believe it ;—yet, if hearing this
 Some years ago—I should have set it down
 As dreamy fancies of a morbid grief.
 But when one's steps have in the valley trod,
 'Mid fearsome shapes and terrors of the night ;
 And *then* hath seen the bliss of breaking day,—
 The globe of gold set in a ruby cup,
 Uplifted o'er the shoreless stretch of sea,—
 He knows, as ne'er before, the bliss of *light*,
 And so can go his way and do his work,
 And wait for rest and sweet companionship

Till God's own curfew sends its silver call
Through purpling eve, to bring the labourer home !

CLARA.

You told me, Philip, that fair moonlight eve,
When in its wondrous beauty we rejoiced,
Blessed,—too—in our reunion,—marred too soon,
That you would sometime tell me of yourself,
And *how* that dreary darkness turned to light ?

PHILIP.

It is a long sad story, friend of mine !
Yet I have wished to tell it all to you,
Who ever seemed a portion of my life ?
From those fair opening days that seem to wear
The roseate hues of morning, as we trace
With laggard steps the midway path of life !
Oh ! well I know how, with a sister's care,
You watched my course, grieving for perverse speech
And wayward courses that my restless mind
Would take,—far wandering from that safer way
In which you longed to help my wilful feet.
Yet I was made so ;—all things I must try,
Accepting nothing till I saw the proof.
And as I older grew and more observed,—
Taking your honoured father's daily walk
To measure others by,—too soon I saw
How few of all who bore the Christian name
Were true like him in thought and word and deed !
I heard some preachers, ever beating out
The same fine points of doctrine :—‘ Thus and so
You must *believe*,—on peril of your soul !’
But as for Christlike *spirit*,—for such lives
As should have flowed from a true faith in Him,—
For righteousness and truth in daily round,—
In shop or mart, on platforms, at the polls,—
These seemed too oft forgotten ; or, at best,
If grievous wrongs at times were spurned, condemned,
There seemed so little urgent zeal to drive
The accursed thing out from the Christian camp,

Lulling the conscience with assurance strange :—
'Repent ! 'twill be as if it ne'er had been.'
As if Christ owned repentance such as *this* !
Or if some heavenly-minded prophet rose,
Like those of old who feared not to denounce
Evil *as* evil, wheresoever wrought,
Beneath the purple, or the beggar's rags,—
Too oft it seemed to me he had to share
The prophet's meed of hate and bitter scorn ;
He had 'forgot his office, turned aside
From preaching the pure Gospel,'—as if Christ
Himself had not rebuked with scathing wrath
The 'white-washed sepulchres' his keen eye marked
Mid those who deemed themselves 'elect' of God !
And—seeing how observance blotted out
The charge to 'love thy neighbour as thyself,'
The very test and proof of higher love,—
And how misguided men misread the truth,—
I came to think religion was a snare,
And would have none of it ! I know how oft
I grieved you by my rash and reckless words,
As if a full-orbed light of wisdom grew
In weak, one-sided mortals like myself.
I know,—too,—that you thought the trouble lay
In books and arguments I liked to bring
Into our talks, to show how science seemed
At war with what *you* held as truth divine,—
And *I* had come to question,—e'en to hate,
Because of many wrongs done in its name !
Then when my restless soul would wander wide
To see the changeful world, and human life
In distant lands, 'mid peoples new and strange,
I watched how each its own religion held,—
Kept certain fixed *observance* ;—for the rest,
Lived its own wayward, earth-bound life, the same
As if it feared no unseen, righteous Power,
Thinking by rite and worship to insure
Peace and immunity from final ill,
In spite of sinful, selfish, reckless lives,—
Just as so many 'Christians' did at home !

Thus I philosophized,—light-hearted,—then,
Until *that* happened,—altering life for me,
Which showed the barrenness of all my thought,
The impotence of all my fancied strength,
To meet *one* crisis that laid bare the heart
Into its inmost core.—I will not now
Further explain. Our sorrow is too fresh
For that sweet saint whose presence haunts us still ;—
It was so good to see her once again !
You never knew how, once, her smile could hold
My boyhood's wayward fancy captured fast.
You were my friend and comrade,—shared my life ;
But *her* I worshipped, as a pure bright star,
Though I would never have confessed it *then* !

CLARA.

How strange ! For Gertrude——

PHILIP.

What ? Why do you stop ?

CLARA.

I think that you were very dear to her
In those old days,—far dearer than you knew ;
For love has always been her very life.

PHILIP.

I had not thought she honoured me so much ;
And 'tis as well that neither of us knew
The other's thought. We were not meant for mates !
Mine was a boy's first fancy,—upward cast,
Fading too soon in less ethereal dreams ;
But when I saw her here, so little changed,
It seemed to bring before me long-lost years,
With all their fancies bright, and eager thoughts,
And unvoiced aspiration, crushed too soon
By contact with the hardening ways of life,
And low ideals, springing up like weeds,
That ever crowd and kill the fairest flowers !
But here comes Ernest. I half dread for him
The meeting.

CLARA.

Nay, you need not. He will be
 Calmer than you. But I must leave you now,
 That you may talk more freely. Stay! He wished
 That I should give you these imperfect lines,
 Inspired by her calm beauty as she lay
 Like marble chiselled by the noblest skill,
 With peace expressed in every curve and line,
 Hushing our sorrow to a reverent awe.
 He wished that you should read them, ere you met,
 That you might better know his thought of her.

*She goes, and PHILIP reads the lines while
 ERNEST is approaching.*

‘SHE IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH.’

Tread lightly, for she sleeps ; we did not know
 That death could be so beautiful as this ;—
 Infinite peace on marble cheek and brow
 Lies, like an angel’s kiss !
 In rapt repose, in sweet unconscious grace,
 She sleeps,—the fair hands lightly laid to rest ;
 A quiet not of earth is on her face,
 Pure as the snowy flowers upon her breast.
 It is not *she*, but the fine counterpart
 Of all that she but yesterday did seem,
 Fashioned and moulded by divinest art,
 Fair as a poet’s dream !—
 Sacred as love,—though but the vacant shrine
 Whence love hath fled to seek a nobler goal,
 Hallowed by touch of messengers divine,
 That bore to fairer realms the fairer soul !
 And we who linger mid life’s toil and pain,
 Nor find the meaning of its mystery,
 Shall keep within our hearts a tenderer strain
 For that sweet memory ;
 To lift our souls from this poor life below
 To that which far transcends the outward sight,
 Whose peace, through tears, the sorrowing heart may know,
 Whose fulness dwells with God in life and light !

SCENE II.—PHILIP and ERNEST meeting. PHILIP grasps his friend's hand, showing much emotion.

PHILIP.

My dear, dear friend !

ERNEST.

I know all you would say !—
Well, 'tis the end of many cherished hopes,
And therefore Faith must take their empty place,
And Hope look on to other life than this !

PHILIP.

Your faith, I hear, has nobly stood the test ;
Nay, I can see it in your tranquil face,
In which I traced some anxious lines of care
When last I saw you.

ERNEST.

Yes ; a haunting fear
Oppressed me that my hopes were all too bright
To be fulfilled on earth—that such as she,
So pure, so sweet, of such ethereal mould,
Would not long linger in this lower sphere,
But soon must pass to fairer realms of love !
And so I treasured every look and tone,
E'en as a miser every glittering coin ;
Each changing pulse and hue of her fair cheek
I marked with anxious care. But when, one day,
She told me—she must leave me for a time,
Summoned by One whose voice she must obey,
Whose loving call she had so long obeyed ;—
Oh, *then* I had mine hour of conflict sore,
Till I could give her willingly to Him,
Knowing that what *He* does is always *well*,
Seeing *her peace*,—the radiance of her face,
That seemed to feel the Love Invisible
With realizing force, that overpowered

Her tender, clinging love for all she held
So dear in this life. Seeing this myself,
I could not,—loving her,—have grudged her then
The bliss that ‘passeth knowledge.’ So I closed
Her gentle eyes, and with them dearest hopes,
And turned to take once more the humble work
My Master gave :—to toil and wait and pray
Until He calls *me*, too, to that full joy
He hath prepared for all who love Him here.
Those stanzas of dear Clara’s well describe
Her beauty, even in death, and all we felt
That solemn peace said to *us*,—left behind !

PHILIP.

And have *you*, then, no shrinking from the thought
Of all the loneliness,—the craving heart,
Bereft of so much that enriches life,
Which you must henceforth miss,—the more alone
Because you dreamed of sweet sustaining love ?

ERNEST.

I fear it not,—my friend ! What has sufficed
In sorest need will never fail in *less* ;
And life for me has nothing left to dread !
Then, too, I love my simple islanders,
With all their perverseness and wilful ways ;
And, loving them, will happier dwell with them
Than if I had to carve my life anew
To fit a world whose ways are foreign now
For one who long hath dwelt with simple souls,
Like little children, blunderers even in guile !
Scarce could I bear the chilling hollowness
That here, alas ! I see on every side :—
The Church, half-hearted, fettering her hands
With worldly love of luxury and show,
The splendour of the earthly temple, set
Above the unseen one of living stones,
Each severed part contending with the rest
In selfish rivalry of outward pomp,

While the fair spiritual temple lies
Shattered in fragments, each one vainly set
To hold itself the *One*,—alone complete ;—
While all have nigh forgot the Great Command,—
The Lord's last parting charge He left with men,—
That all His own should one another love,
Even as *He* loved *them* ! Yet, spurning this,
As if it ne'er had come from lips Divine,
They who profess to be most Christian stand
In proud aloofness from their brothers here,—
Nay, will not join with these in prayer or praise,
Because they differ on this point or that
In matters touching the mere outward rite,—
Not even the ' weightier matters of the law,'
The righteousness and justice God demands ;—
Far less the precious fountain-spring of good,
The love to man that tests the love to God !
So, finding weakness, blindness,—everywhere,
I go again to my dear islanders,
Feeling that *they* at least desire to do
The things they know to be God's will for them ;
And,—spite their lingering, childish awkwardness,—
Are following onward in the way of faith,
Far, far more steadfastly than many here
Who look on *them* as mere barbarians still !

PHILIP.

Yes, yes ! I fully understand it all.
For many a day, you know, such things as these
You glance at now,—which I too clearly saw,—
The blind misreading of the lesson taught
By those who should have understood it well,—
Long kept me from the perfect Master's feet,
Until I saw how our sin-darkened hearts
Obscure the purest rays of light Divine !
Yet still these things repel me, and I feel
A growing longing to join hands with you
And help you found, in that fair, palm-crowned isle,
A little Arcady of simple faith,—
Far from the jarring world of clashing creeds !

ERNEST.

Thrice welcome, friend of mine, your help would be ;—
But you must count the cost ! I only fear
That you in time might find it banishment ;
For you are many-sided. Science,—life,—
All realms of thought—you love to wander through ;
And much I fear that, 'mid such simple folk,
You'll miss the stimulus of equal minds,
And chafe for lack of what you scorned before !

PHILIP.

Yes, I must well consider ; for there are
More than myself to think of. Much I owe
To Clara,—more than sister, more than friend !—
To cheer her solitary life must be
One of my duties, too long left undone,
Neglected through my wayward, wandering mood ;
With her I must take counsel,—*then*—perchance
God may so order things that I may put
This wasted life to some true use at last !

ERNEST.

God grant it, Philip, as is best for you !
I have my *wish*, but I will say no more,
Till you can tell me all that I would know.
Farewell ! My thanks for your true sympathy ;
'Tis Heaven's immortal balm for sorrow here,
Growing in human hearts from root Divine,—
Infinite love, that suffers with our pain,—
And by its tender comfort makes it joy !

TRANSFORMATION.

We planted the bare brown stems one day,
When the autumn winds blew cold,
And the dying leaves fell mournfully,
In their tarnished red and gold.

And you wondered how they could ever grow,—
 Those stems so brown and bare,
 With never a leaf or a bud to show
 That a touch of life was there.

Yet when spring, returning, has blessed the earth,
 And summer is gay with bloom,
 Their glory of roses shall wake to birth,
 And pour forth their rich perfume.

Thus we gently lay in their lowly bed
 The dear ones we cherished so ;
 Dull sight would tell us that they are dead,
 And more we may not know !

But Faith looks on to the glorious spring
 That she whispers shall yet be ours,
 And the new life's nobler blossoming
 Into fair eternal flowers.

Then well may we wait with patience here,
 Nor weep o'er the churchyard sod ;
 We shall find the lost whom we held so dear
 In the glorious garden of God !

And Love breaks out in triumphant cry
 As she soars on her tireless wing :
 ' Now, where, O Grave, is thy victory ?
 And where, O Death, thy sting ?'

SCENE III.—*PHILIP and CLARA in a flower-garden, where
 CLARA is busily engaged.*

PHILIP.

Careful as ever of your plants, I see.
 You are as tender of these fragile things
 As many a mother, of her infant flock !

CLARA (*smiling*).

Yes ! 'tis the instinct born within us all,
 To nurse, protect and shelter human flowers,—

Dumb animals,—or these poor passive plants,
Helpless to save themselves from coming ills,
Yet ready to reward our care with smiles !

PHILIP.

Well, can you spare an hour from them to me ?
I have so much to tell you,—much to ask
Of counsel for myself,—my future life !

CLARA.

Fain would I hear whate'er you have to say,
For not so many are the things that claim
My care,—that I should grudge an hour to *you*,
The sole friend left to me from childhood's days !

PHILIP.

I wished to tell you somewhat of myself,
My inner self, that I have told to none,
Yet would that you should know, dear friend,—to whom
I owe a brother's confidence, at least,
And to whose judgment I would now refer
For counsel that must shape my future course.

CLARA.

Come, then, to our beloved cliff-side nook,
Where Gertrude watched with me your homing sail
So lately. Ah ! it seems a year ago
Since Death has come, and cut so wide a swath
Between the days that were and those that are !
I know it is not long,—for even then
A stray bough here and there was tinged with gold,—
First touch of Autumn's finger lightly laid ;
And *now* the red leaves flutter slowly down
From those great boughs that scarcely hide the blue,
While all the forest gold has turned to dross
Beneath the lashing of October winds
And dreary gusts of chill and sobbing rain,
That seemed to weep and moan o'er Gertrude's grave !

PHILIP.

Nay, let your thoughts not linger mid the gloom !
Your faith must look beyond the autumn's death
To that new-budding life that silent flows
Into the growing bud,—and swelling,—drives
The dying leaflet from the parent bough ;—
So think of that great glorious living tide
That flows for ever from the boundless sea
Of life and love, that bathes the throne of God !

CLARA.

Strangely yet sweetly fall upon mine ear
From *you*—such all unlooked-for words of faith,
So sweet, so solacing to my sad heart !
But now pray tell me of yourself,—and all
You vaguely hinted, when we talked before ;
I long to hear all that befell your life
When distance parted us, and we could know
So little of you in your wandering ways,
And all you saw, and thought and hoped and felt !
Often we thought of you, and wondered oft
What scenes, what pleasures, held your roaming feet !

PHILIP.

And I, for my part, oft have blamed myself
That I so long could leave my home and you ;
And, most of all, when your great sorrow came,
Taking your loving father from your side,
And leaving you to meet new cares alone,
I was not there to take a brother's place !
But, then, the roving instinct was too strong,
And still it ever mastered my resolve
Of turning homeward ;—for I ever hoped
To gain new light from the new skies I sought.
Still disappointment dogged me,—drove me on,
Unheeding the still, small voice in my heart,
Which yet must be our surest guide to truth !

CLARA.

I found *that* truth at home, and *you* abroad !

PHILIP.

Well,—it were long to tell of all I marked
In foreign lands, 'neath unfamiliar skies ;—
The ever-changing types of life and man,
Yet, with the heart at centre still the same,
'Neath all diversities of form and hue ;
And still I found that strange implanted sense
That we call Conscience could be reached at last,
Teaching that right is right, and should be done,
However strangely *that* might be misread,
And teaching, too, that something more than earth
Can give—is needed to complete our good !
And so I roamed in philosophic calm,
Yet treasuring old home memories,—like the dream
Of early youth, as sweet and sacred things
In store for some fair season yet to come ;
Till one long cruise I made in Southern seas,
At Eastern cities touching here and there.
A dreamy, lotus-eating time it was,
And drowsily the long, still days slipped by,
'Neath sultry skies, and languorous, fragrant air,
Lulling disturbing thought to sleep and dreams,
Yet waking vague, half-understood desire
For something that should fill an empty heart.
Then,—ah !—how *yet* the memory burns and stings !
A woman's face enthralled my wayward will !
It haunts me still in many a fevered dream,
Though long the passion hath been quenched and cold,
That drew me to her with resistless spell,
And held me by her charm of glance and tone.
It was her nature,—instinct,—what you will !
Her lustrous eyes in their mysterious depths
Seemed to enshrine unfathomed store of love
And thought and passion ; and her witching smile,
The soft, low, languid, half-caressing tones,
And silvery accents of her Southern voice,
All held me hers with a magnetic force,
That crept so stealthily and unawares
About my inner life, before I knew.

I could not cast the sweet enchantment off,
Nor would have wished to do it if I could !
I thought of naught, and dreamed of naught but *her*,—
Content to win the guerdon of a smile,
Counting all else but loss,—so I could live
In my fool's paradise of lovely dreams,
Too bright and fair for earthly life of ours ;
For all too soon came rude awakening !
She told me, one still night, when a full moon
Touched with her silver wand the heaving sea,
That she was long betrothed to one who soon
Would board the ship and join her onward way,
And,—reaching port,—become her wedded lord.
She told it with a sad, dejected air,
As an impending fate that *must* be faced ;
Her troth was plighted, and her lot was sealed !
Then she would sigh, as if her heart would break
For sorrow that our lives had crossed so late,—
That we,—who seemed to fit each other's needs
As closely as the calyx fits the flower,—
Must yet by Fate be parted evermore !
In vain I pled that marriage so enforced
Were sin against her truest self and soul :
No words could move her ; and I vainly thought
'Twas but *her* reading of the true and good,
So often blindly twisted into wrong ;
And ceased to urge her into *mine*, instead !
Each night I walked the deck in inward strife,
Powerless to lull the passion-waves that surged
Through all mine inner being, stirring strong
All that was in me,—depths I ne'er had known !
That I could *lose her* scarce I could believe,
Who seemed become a portion of myself ;—
That she should wed another—was despair !
Yet towards herself my anger could not live,
For look and tone and gesture seemed so sweet,
That I could only long and pine for them.
Yet,—present with me,—how they maddened me
To think they were another's ! So they passed,—
Those bitter, sweet, fair, feverish tropic days ;

And then *he* came,—the man I feared to see,
Yet loathed and hated more, when I beheld
His coarse yet comely presence,—heard his voice,
So satisfied, so confident was he,
In his own power to compass all his ends !
I writhed at his calm air of ownership ;
In her I scarce could join with him in thought,—
Whose garment's hem I could have knelt to kiss,
Till,—maddened by his bold, complacent leer,—
I think I could have killed him willingly,
But for the inner voice of stern rebuke,—
The better self that saved me from the worse !
How many days I spent in passion's hell
I counted not ! 'Twas one dread feverish dream,
From which I could not rouse my spell-bound soul.

At length there came one charmed eventide,
Buried in memory deep for evermore ;
We talked together, as the sunset passed
Into the early moonlight ;—glassy calm
The sea lay, like a pond that scarcely knew
A ripple trembling o'er its smooth expanse,
And mirrored back the crimson-purple glow
In softer, richer radiance than above ;
While one palm-crested islet rose afar,
With silver fringe that marked its circling reef.
It was an eve for lovers, and my dream
Of passion throbbing woke, in pristine power,
As we stood there, and her dark, wistful eyes
Sought mine, it seemed to me, in mute appeal,
As if she asked for pardon,—help ;—and then
There broke from me some words I could not keep.
And *he*, not far away, divined, perchance,
How the case stood, and breaking on our talk,
He led her off with sharp, imperious air,
That plainly spoke his wish, if not command,
That she should hold herself aloof from me.

That night, like one distraught, I paced the deck,
And even prayed for help in my despair

Against this man who robbed me of the prize
I set above all else in earth or heaven !
Ah ! how the strange, hushed stillness of that hour
Seems to enfold me still !—a hush like death,
Save for the vessel's heavy, throbbing pulse,
And now and then a seaman's muffled call,
Or plash of fish, that glanced with silver sheen.
Sleep was far distant from me, so I paced
The lonely deck, absorbed in bitter thoughts,
Whose tumult seemed to rend my inmost soul !
Nor noted I the mounting wraiths of cloud,
That swiftly overspread the purple sky,
Till suddenly the darkness of the night
Was torn asunder, and a mighty wind
Rushed o'er the hissing sea ;—the clouds above
Broke in red darting fire and thunder-peal.
The mighty vessel quivered like a reed,
Then fled before the storm, like hunted prey,
Beneath the lashing of the hurricane,
That tossed the crests of waves about her spars,
In blinding showers of spray and hissing streams
That fell like water-spouts upon the deck.

Then rose another storm of groans and cries,
And anguished prayers from lips that seldom prayed !
Till with a crash the straining vessel struck,
Impaled upon the circling coral reef
That girt the palm-crowned isle ;—and swift the waves
Leaped up to seize their prey. And all the time
One only thought I had,—sought *one* alone.
Chance brought me near her as the vessel swerved,
Shuddering,—to make her fatal, headlong plunge.
Alone she stood, her lovely fear-blanchèd face
Upraised to mine in agonized appeal.—
Her soft hand clasped my own with frantic grip,
As of the dying, while with choking sobs
She begged I would not leave her there to die,
As *he* had done,—the craven-hearted wretch,
Who pressed into the boats to save himself,
Leaving *her* to a swift impending fate,

Rather than risk his safety,— seeking *hers*.
I held her trembling form with fierce delight
That this sharp stress of Fate had made her mine ;
I tried to soothe her terror with fond words,
Bidding her trust to me, for nothing now
Should part us—nay, not even death itself !
Then, while she, sobbing, cried aloud for life,
The vessel lurched and settled slowly down.
Within the reef I knew the sea was calm
And shallow,—and I hoped to reach the shore !
I seized a spar, and bade her grasp it tight ;
Then clasping her, and half astride the spar,
Caught a great wave that bore us o'er the reef
To smoother water ;—then, with all my strength
I struck out for the land that seemed so near,
Hoping to set her living on the shore
Of that fair isle that seemed our haven now.
But,—cumbered by my charge,—my strength failed fast,
And in despair I felt 'twas almost gone,
When suddenly I touched a rocky ledge
And braced the spar against a jagged seam,
While with a desperate effort, still I held
The limp, unconscious form that lay so still,
Motionless, unresponsive, silent now ;
And, crouching there, exhausted, watched for day.
But when, at last, I saw, in the gray dawn
The face I loved, so deadly white and cold,—
Heart failed and strength o'ertaxed gave way at last ;
I sank down senseless,—and I thought—to death !

Thence memory is a blank ! I could not tell
How long a time had passed,—when, all at once—
My sleeping consciousness at last awoke.
I thought I was a boy at home once more,
Listening to you and Gertrude as you sang
At eventide, your simple childish hymns ;
I heard the chiming of the evening bell,—
I saw the river flowing softly blue,—
The dusky, weather-beaten pines and oaks
That crest the rough gray crags and verdant slopes ;

I saw your father's smile and silver hair,
And a strange peace through all my being flowed.
But voices strange in tone broke on mine ear,
And when at last I opened languid eyes,
My glance took in a thatch of reeds and palm,
And woven walls of matting curtained round
My couch of palm-leaves, soft and loosely piled ;
On floor of coral, fine as powdery snow ;
And tall lithe forms, that seemed of living bronze,
Passed and repassed like phantoms in a dream,
And strange, uncomprehended words and tones
Broke gently on my scarce attending ear ;
And still I lay like one in peaceful dream
He fears to break and face the world again !

But when at last my fast returning strength
Compelled a fuller life to flow once more
Through my half-torpid being,—looking up,
My wistful glance encountered eyes that since
I've learned to love as I have loved but few ;
And Ernest's tones, with tender pity soft,
Fell soothing on my ear, and, bit by bit,
I pieced out life again. Ah ! then awoke
The throbbing pain—weakness had lulled to sleep !
With sharp misgiving, I inquired for *her*
Whose cold, white face I carried in my heart,—
As I had seen it in the gray of dawn.
Alive or dead I claimed her—she was mine
By every sacred right ! But Ernest brought
Such love and wisdom to his arduous task
As somewhat calmed the tempest in my breast,—
Preparing me to hear the bitter truth,
That earthly love could never claim her *now*,
Since Death himself had seized her for his own ;
For when the waves had washed us to the shore,
That was so close,—and strong and eager hands
Had drawn us out and laid us on the beach,—
The cares that brought *me* slowly back to life
Had left her still in that relentless grasp
Whence no despair of love could call her back !

CLARA (*after a long pause*).

And what of all the rest?—that wretched man?

PHILIP.

They said a sandal-trader passed that day,
Lay by, and took some men from open boats;
I know no more, and scarcely cared to ask.
My heart seemed dead within me for a time;
Life had no charm to win me back, to bear
A burden far too heavy for my strength!
Fain had I closed my wearied eyes for aye,
Till Ernest's generous love at last won mine,
His strange, lone life, the simple, child-like souls
Who gathered round him as their prophet there,
Slowly aroused my slumbering sympathy,
While torturing memories, with the passing weeks
Grew fainter, less absorbing, day by day.
I walked with Ernest on his daily rounds,
And saw the wondrous change his work had wrought
In winning fierce barbarians, as these *were*
From cruel savagery to Christian love;
For, as they often told me, had it chanced
To any shipwrecked stranger as to me
In the old time, he quickly had been slain
For gruesome feast. But *they*, instead, had been
The faithful guardians of my helpless days,
Nursing me back to life, rejoicing much
At my returning strength, and saying, oft,
In their strange, child-like, broken English speech,
How glad they are for 'Missi's'* life come back!
I sat beside them in their palm-roofed church,
And listened to the child-like hymns they sang
That had so sweetly struck my waking ear,
And heard again in Ernest's winning tones
The old familiar story of the Cross,
Which melted some of those poor souls to tears,
That Love Divine should suffer for their sake;
And the old simple faith, that I had thought

* 'Missi,' the native term for missionary.

Was gone from me for ever, stirred again ;—
 And from the blankness of a dull despair,
 My heart and life came back again to me,
 And my dark soul found light and God at last !

CLARA.

At last ! thank God for that !

PHILIP.

'Tis passing strange
 How far His ways outrun our conscious ken,
 That I, who held my powers in such esteem,
 Impatient of all limits to my thought,
 Should, blind with passion, wreck my nobler life,
 And there in that lone island of the sea,
 'Mid men I counted barbarous, awake
 With inward vision cleared to catch the light !
 You love a parable,—my story's one.

CLARA.

I cannot tell you what a joy to me
 The ending of your parable has brought !

PHILIP.

Then will you wonder that I hold that isle
 Sacred beyond all other spots of earth,
 Where my old life died with *her*, and the new
 Sprang up to live for ever ? You know *now*
 Why Ernest seems the friend of friends to me,
 Unconscious still of half his blessed work.

CLARA.

Nay ! 'tis most fitting you should hold him thus.

PHILIP.

And yet I said not he was first of *all*
 Within my heart ;—for there is one I loved
 From earliest boyhood,—playmate,—comrade true,
 The sister friend on whom I used to lean,
 Scarce conscious that I did, till I had lost
 That dear familiar presence for a time !

I had my boyish dream,—my fever fit
 Of wild, impetuous passion, ending so
 As I have told you. Nay, *not* all is told ;
 For when, in talk with Ernest, once I spoke
 Briefly of her,—beside her island grave,
 And of the man whom I had hated so,
 He told me that he knew him but too well
 For one of his worst enemies,—a man
 Without a trace of conscience or of truth,
 Set on *one* enterprise,—to gather in
 The precious sandal-wood that brought him wealth.
 Murder and robbery were naught to *him*,
 So he could grasp the treasure that he sought.
 He told me of his cruelty and lust,
 His fiendish plots to spread disease and death
 Among the natives, and so make it seem
 That Ernest's presence brought them endless ill,
 That they might kill or drive him from their isle !
 And then I felt what nature *hers* had been
 To plight her troth to such an one as this—
 For love of his vile lucre,—not himself,
 For she had told me that she loved him not.
 And so *that* spell was broken, and I knew
 How false the gleam that I had taken for light,
 The siren's voice that lured me to despair ;
 And yet I often think that, in her way,
 She loved me in such fashion as she could !

CLARA.

Poor girl ! Poor shipwrecked life ! And yet, perchance,
 Swift death were better than the lot she chose.

PHILIP.

Yes ! I have thought that coward act of his,
 That base desertion in his abject fright,
 Saved her from far worse fate than that she met.
 That thought, and that alone, assuaged the pain
 And ruth I felt for her untimely end !
 Since then, with heaven-purged sight, my heart discerns

The truer charm that blessed my early days,—
Clara ! true lode-star of my soul and life !
And though long silence oft has tried you sore,
'Twas not that I forgot you. Always home
And you were the twin stars that marked my goal ;
And what were home without its household light ?
Now, having told you all I had to tell,
And kept naught back from you, I fain would ask
If you could trust your future life with mine,
So long your friend and brother,—lover now,
In love's true sense,—as I would dare to hope !
Could you, dear Clara, after these lost years
Of fruitless roving,—could you overlook
With love forgiving,—all the waywardness,
The seeming carelessness of the old ties,
The wandering fancy, and the misplaced love,
That wrought its own sore punishment ? Can you
Forgive me,—trust me,—lay your hand in mine
With the old faith of childhood's happy years ?

CLARA.

Naught have I to forgive ! I had no claim
Save that—I think—I loved you from the day
My father brought you, orphaned, to our home.
Your boyish daring charmed me, won my heart ;
I sought your aid in all my childish needs,
And no one wiser, save my father, deemed.
I need not tell you what bewilderment
Your growing unbelief awoke in me,
Shaking my faith for many a troubled year,
Perchance to find it stronger in the end !
Your life with mine has been so closely twined,
That scarce in thought I could divide them now,
Nor more could break the bond knit by the years,
Than kindred ties that linked our lives at first !
Whate'er you do, your lot seems part of mine ;
Where'er you go, my heart still goes with you.
But are you sure you know yourself aright,
And that in future years no newer love
Might yet again be more than mine to you ?

PHILIP.

My faithful friend, ' my sister, and my love !'
 How the sweet words of that old sacred song
 Fit into all our deepest truest love !
 How doubly strong the old familiar tie,
 Close interwoven in our web of life !
 And yet I wonder not that you should ask,—
 Since I have told you all the bitter past,—
 If I am sure that ne'er again my heart
 Could drift from its safe anchorage in you ?
 Yes ! I *am* sure, because that anchor holds
 Deep in the very bed-rock of my life !
 But now, how shall I ask if you could make
 For me a sacrifice I dare not claim—
 Nay, hardly dare suggest it :—Could you leave
 Your cherished home, so hallowed in your heart
 By memories of your happy childhood life,
 And sacred hours here passed with those we see
 With our dull, earthly vision *here* no more ?
 Yet now,—the wasted years behind me set,
 One worthy aim before me seems to rise,
 For which my scarce used powers might yet avail.
 You know the old ambitions of my youth,
 O'er-topping all the possible in me.
 Dreams of the morning—they have passed as soon !
 Yet is the vagrant mood still strong within,
 The old impatience of conventions dull,
 In which my spirit scarce could breathe and live.
 But Ernest's life woke a new world for me,—
 A world of possibilities untold,
 Turning romantic dreams to higher use ;
 A virgin soil to work ;—a plastic race
 To mould into a higher, nobler type
 Than this old, outworn one of ours at home ;—
 Such is the work that Ernest has begun ;
 But much he needs a helper, and I think,
 Sharing his aims and, in degree, his faith,
 My hands could strengthen his, and carry on
 His work in ways he scarcely dreams of ; yet,

For looking on, it oft has seemed to me
That it were worthy of the highest powers
God hath vouchsafed to man, in such a spot
To work with Him in moulding noble men
To match the nature He has set them in !
The task the bold Prometheus once essayed,
As runs the legend, we may now fulfil,
With that mysterious aid that God bestows
So freely on the faithful, seeking soul,
That watches, while it strives for sacred fire.
These child-like men and women need to grow
In mind as well as life of heart and soul.
And so, while Ernest,—having vanquished now
The dark, wild fancies that so blinded them
Against the entrance of the light of life,—
Builds on the true foundation he has laid,
I, in my way, may lead their opened minds
To truth of lower rank, yet not less truth ;—
May teach them those great laws that God has writ
In the earth's ribs of rock, in leaf and flower,
And in the sparkling vault of heaven they see,—
As yet unseeing,—and in their own selves
Formed for the noblest and the happiest ends
That living creatures know beneath the sun,
If but they keep the guiding outline traced
To shape these living stones and human shrines,—
As much His law divine, as if His hand
Had traced them carven on a slab of stone.
Think you not it a fair emprise 'twould be,
To till a human garden such as this,—
To crown one fairest spot of this fair world,
So far as human hands the task may dare,
With richer beauty of the noblest life
High thought and living faith can nourish there ?

CLARA.

Scarce could a higher mission be bestowed
On any life of mortal here below.—
A noble thought, indeed ! But what of dreams

You had of other laurels to be won—
Your love of science?

PHILIP.

Nay, it is not dead ;
Good work for science still I love to do—
This, too, a part of God's eternal truth,—
Through study of the myriad-featured life
That bursts to life beneath a tropic sun.
My years of preparation will avail
For reading Nature there and planting thoughts
In the new soil of those untutored minds
As yet undreamed of,—thus enriching them
By sharing with them my long-garnered store,
And doubly blessed in thus imparting it !
While you, my love, should have your fitting place,
No less beneficent, for you could lead
Those simple, gentle, lowly woman-souls,
Not knowing yet what dignity may crown
The lot of women,—into all that gives
Grace, power, and winning charm to her who rules
By right divine the kingdom of sweet home !
You could mould mothers for the future years,
And wives to mate with nobler, wiser men ;
Your music, dear, would win their simple hearts,
And teach them sweeter melodies to sing
Than those wild, plaintive, wavering chords that seem
The outcome of their half-developed souls,
Seeking for fuller life as yet unknown.
Then, think you, dearest, you could leave your home,
Cherished and dear, with all its sacred links
With our departed, for a task like this ?

CLARA.

Indeed, I think I could not happier be ;
For helping you in such a work as this
Would be the highest good my heart could ask.

PHILIP.

Worth leaving all you love—for ?

CLARA.

Nay,—you know

What I love *best* would be most fully mine !
 And more than any smaller, pettier boon,
 True womanhood desires to help and heal
First,—the lives nearest, closest to her heart,—
 Then,—other lives that lack what she can give,
 And what she prizes most when others need !

PHILIP.

'Tis like you, Clara. Would more women were
 Akin to *you* in heart ; then would there be
 More happy homes and fewer shipwrecked lives,
 For lack of higher aims and nobler love.

CLARA.

Scarce do you know me, if you think that this
 Were hard for *me*,—to go with one I love
 More than all else on earth—to life so rich
 In love and happy work ! If this dear spot
 Were dearer than I hold it, though 'tis linked
 With all the happy past, and dearly loved,
 And hard to leave,—perchance, for aught save this,—
 'Tis no unwelcome call that bids me hence
 With one I love, to lifelong task of love !

PHILIP (*after a pause*).

Then, if your heart and judgment thus agree
 To do so wonderful a thing as this,
 To go to share with me and sweeten toil,
 And be my inspiration, helpmeet, friend,
 Let us go tell to Ernest this good news ;
 'Twill be the gladdest—now—that he can hear,—
 That you, *her* dearest friend, so closely knit
 With her whom God hath taken from his side,
 Should be inclined, by ordering Divine,
 To take, yourself, the task her hands resigned,
 At higher call, no doubt for higher work
 Than any your poor thought can dream of here !

CLARA.

Yes, let us cheer him with our happiness ;
'Twill lighten somewhat the deep sense of loss
To hear of our united earnest hope
To be to him what we conjoined can be,
And no one else beside ! Our reverent love
Shall make *her* memory a blessing still
To cheer and strengthen all his life to come !

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A moonlight night at sea. PHILIP and CLARA
pacing the deck of PHILIP'S yacht, the 'Winged
Victory.'*

CLARA.

Oh, what a glorious night ! I marvel not
At all the rapturous praises I have heard
Of nights in Southern climes ; for pale and dim
Seems our most lovely moonlight, when compared
With this effulgent splendour on the sea,
And all about us,—almost too intense,—
Too great a glory for our mortal sight !
Through the enchanted air we seem to float
On these great snowy wings that bear us on—
The *Winged Victory* ! How aptly named
Our vessel seems, a symbol of the faith
That is the inward life and moving power
Of Ernest's course, and ours—I hope—as well.

PHILIP.

Yes ; as I think I've said to you before,
That grand old figure, born of noble dreams,
Which, struggling through the dimness of the dawn,
Has ever seemed to me to shadow forth
The victory of faith that soars aloft,
Where straining, panting Thought can never climb,

And safely crosses on triumphant wings
The gulf before which Reason shrinking stands,
Scarce daring farther.—

CLARA.

Ah ! how well I know
Our souls must needs have heavenly wings to reach
That pure empyrean of light Divine,
Which our poor human eyes can scarcely bear !
And yet,—how steadfast Ernest ever walks
By faith, with powers unseen ! I notice oft
It seems an effort for him to inweave
Our small concerns into the inner life
That lightly moves within a higher sphere.

PHILIP.

Yes ; it is well that he has gained the power
To realize the life invisible,
Which holds so much for him,—his Saviour Friend,
And her who lives in Christ for evermore !
I often mark with anxious, troubled heart,
His face, that daily grows more pure and sweet ;—
But here he comes, and that rare smile of his
Transfigured in the moonlight splendour seems.

CLARA.

Oh, how like our dear Gertrude, as she looked
At home, one night that I remember well !

ERNEST.

How fair a night, my friends ! Does it not seem
That heaven has come to earth to rest awhile ;—
So radiant is the scene, so full of peace ?
And soon I hope we shall behold again
Our palm-crowned islands, with their silver fringe,
Like emeralds set in sapphire, touched with light.
But see that tiny bark that crosses now
Yon bar of rippling silver on the sea ;
Strange that so small a craft should venture out
So far from land ! The captain on the bridge

And I have watched it from a tiny speck
That nearer draws. Perchance a castaway,
That seeks a rescuing vessel, scanning now
Our sails with eager eyes.

PHILIP (*starting*).

Look ! Did you see ?
I'm sure I caught a sudden flash of light,
As if they made a signal, hard to catch
'Mid this magnificence of silver sheen.

ERNEST.

Yes, there it is again, and clearer now.
No doubt it is a signal of distress.

CLARA.

Oh, then let us go forward. I should like
To watch its progress. See ! the sailors crowd
Already to the bow, with ropes in hand,
And slacken sail to meet the little craft.

LOVE AND DEATH.

Once Love and Death were wrestling for a prize,—
The tender maid each sought to claim his own.
Death tore her from Love's arms, and tears and cries
But straight he found the lovely maid was gone.
An empty victory his, he stood alone,
While Love cried out, with shining, tearful eyes,
' On to the skies !'

Then Death sank mateless through the yawning ground,
While Love unfurled his wings of stainless white,—
On to the golden gates of sunset bound,—
While Faith and Hope upheld him in his flight,
Until there dropped from those pure realms of light
In tones of music,—the triumphant sound,
' *My love is found !*'

SCENE II.—PHILIP and CLARA in a remote corner of the deck at twilight.

CLARA.

Is that you, Philip?

PHILIP.

Darling, yes, and here
In quiet I would talk apart with you,
While evening's purple curtain softly falls
To screen our privacy ;—for I would speak
Of things best closely kept between ourselves.
You know the sudden shock it was to me
When,—rising from the deep,—for so it seemed,
I saw the hateful visage of that man,
Last seen on one too well-remembered night,
Of which I told you once, when life to me
Seemed swallowed up in death for evermore—
The man of all men hateful to my soul,
More for his baseness than from jealousy !
And yet, now that I know the deadly wrong
Of hatred cherished towards a fellow-man
By those to whom so much has been forgiven,
I would not, if I could, have dared refuse
Our help and succour to the castaways
Who in extremity besought our aid.
Although I much misdoubt that we have here
A heartless viper, ready to destroy
The hand that rescued, if occasion serve !

CLARA.

I do not like his face or trust his words.
Even when,—to gain our favour,—he speaks fair,
A look of furtive evil lurks behind
The outward semblance of a feigned esteem ;
And Ernest, I can see, distrusts him too.
Think you he recognised you here?

PHILIP.

Nay, that
I cannot tell. His look eludes my glance ;
Not once his eyes have fairly met my own.
He and the fellows with him are a band
As evil-looking as I ever saw,
Methinks, in all my many wanderings.
And much I doubt their story of the wreck,
And think that probably their own misdeeds
Had brought about a fate too well deserved.
From certain signs, we think a mutinous crew
Had turned them out adrift upon the sea
To meet what fate they might ; for in the boat
Their store of food and water was not low,
And other things they had which scarcely seemed
Like hasty salvage from a sinking ship.
But who comes here ?

ERNEST (*softly*).

Oh, did I startle you ?

PHILIP.

Nay, but I feared some other ears might hear
The subject of our talk, which *you* can guess.
You know I think these men have weapons here
Concealed from us, and yet I hardly dare
To have them searched, lest this should only serve
To rouse at once their anger and revenge.

ERNEST.

Nay, rather let us watch them night and day !
Your captain tells me he will henceforth keep
A double watch on deck, and you and I
Can share the same between us. You can take
The daylight hours, and I will watch at night.

PHILIP.

No. We will share the night and daylight too.
To-night we'll keep together ; for I fear
Something,—I know not what,—may happen soon !

ERNEST.

I'll go to rest awhile. When Clara seeks
Her berth below, I'll come and watch with you.

LOVE AND FAITH.

Up from the gloom and shadows of the night
Faith spread her wings to seek the realms of day,
Through depths unfathomed speeding in her flight.
With pinions strong she cleft the azure way,
Yet still the unmeasured distance stretched afar,
Outreaching seraph's wing and eagle's sight,
And each remotest, faintly gleaming star.

Her heart grew faint, her wings drooped wearily.
Vain seemed the quest, and endless seemed the way !

Then *Love* cried out, with voice that pierced the night,
'*Lo, I am here !*' And straight all space was light ;
Darkness had vanished and the weary way,
And Faith *had* reached the glorious gates of day !

SCENE III.—*The shore of a tropical island, encircled by a reef on which the surf breaks in a silver fringe. A white coral beach, above which the ground rises, dotted with groves of palm and bread-fruit trees, etc. Under their shade ERNEST is reclining on a couch of palm-leaves, and a group of natives, gathered round him, are talking and eagerly gesticulating. PHILIP and CLARA converse apart, while some women and girls eagerly scan CLARA'S face and dress from a distance.*

PHILIP.

Well, dear, here's peace and rest and love and home—
Or such I trust you soon will feel it here !—
I know, with me, you're glad to reach our goal
On our fair *Winged Victory's* pinions white ;—
Glad also to forget the tragic scene
'Mid which our voyage closed !

CLARA.

Ah, fain would I
 Forget that fearful night,—the clash of arms,
 The oaths and groans, the cries of rage and pain,
 And sound of bodies falling on the deck,
 While I, as you desired, remained below
 In helpless dread and anguish,—knowing not
 What fate was yours, nor what might soon be mine !

PHILIP.

It was an ugly scene, but ended soon,
 And might have ended worse, but for the watch
 We kept so closely on those wretched men,
 Who thought to crush us by a sudden blow ;—
 And madly did they fight in desperate stress !
 It was their chance, they thought, to grasp a prize
 That might retrieve their losses, serve their need ;
 But happily *our* arms were ready too,
 And we—to meet them !

CLARA.

Yes. Thank God for that !
 Yet wicked,—heartless,—as we knew that man,
 The painful memory of his evil face,
 His haggard look of hopeless, dull despair,
 As he lay panting out his ebbing life,
 Still haunts me like a spectre, night and day.
 He seemed already to endure the pangs
 Of a lost soul that realized its doom !

PHILIP.

Yes ; 'twas a sight to make us sharply feel
 The dread, mysterious issues of our lives,
 To see how,—making its own misery,—
 That cruel selfish soul that forced its will
 At any bitter cost to other lives,
 Without compunction, pity, or regret,
 So passed despairing to the dark beyond !
We may not judge ; let Him—who knows him best !

But even I must pity this poor wretch
 Who thus had sold his life to fiends of hell,
 And more still the young lad who shared his death,
 Whom he had carried off while yet a boy
 And taught him wickedness,—as others good.
 What chance had *he*,—poor lad? I thought his eyes
 Shone with a softer light as death drew near,
 And seemed to hold a wistful depth of thought,
 Brooding o'er wasted years and shipwrecked youth
 The others, wounded, tended by your hands,
 And softened somewhat by your gentle care,
 Have told me more than I could ever tell
 To you,—or any,—of the fiendish deeds
 Their master wrought, and of the mutiny,
 When the down-trodden, goaded crew rebelled,
 And drove them from the ship, and cut adrift
 The boat in which we found them—to our cost ;—

CLARA.

In our dear Ernest's wounding !

PHILIP.

Yes ; it was
 His self-forgetting, over-trustful heart
 That made him risk too much, in the vain hope
 That he might save blood-shedding. I had fain
 Sent *him* below until the fight was done—
 It jarred his soul to see ; but that base wretch,
 In his malignant fury, shot at him.
That fired my blood,—and swift he was avenged !

CLARA.

But now his wound is healing fast ; and here
 The soft sweet air,—the calm surrounding peace,—
 The love shown by those artless, childlike folk
 Who throng about him with such kindly cares,
 Will soon restore him, I believe and hope,
 To wonted health and that belovèd work
 In which his faithful heart finds all its joy.
 So much awaits him here ! How I rejoice

In being set to such a task as this,—
A task to fill us with the glorious thought
Of being fellow-workers with our Lord,
To hasten on His ends for such as these.
How often,—reading in my lonely past
The wondrous story of our Christian faith,
How, like the mustard-seed, it grew and grew
Till its great branches, spreading far and wide,
Threw grateful shadow o'er the whole round world,—
I've felt that we who live in these last times,
Sharing the fruitage of that tree of life,
Should follow in the steps of those whose toil
Nourished and fostered its first tender years,
And I felt guilty that I simply lived
To gather in the fruits of others' toil !

PHILIP.

Yes, love, it is the seal our God hath set
On our united life, most nobly crowned
In being linked to such a high behest
As this,—to help to mould His image here,
Raising these blindly-groping, childlike hearts
Towards that true Light they half unconscious seek,
Whose rays shall wake in them the budding germs
Of pure and high ideals, such as we
Have learned to love in Christ's own human life,—
Our heritage through centuries of faith !
The seeds we sow take ages for their growth—
Ages of light and heat and heavenly dew,
Nor may we see their rich maturity,
But only tend their growth as God may please,
In the soul-garden He hath given to us,
Wherein to toil for Him till evensong !

CLARA.

Yes ; and perchance our Gertrude knows it all,
From those calm heights where Passion's voice is still
I wonder if her cup of bliss might be
The sweeter for our work with Ernest here ;
For scarcely seem we severed,—she above,

And we below, each in the appointed sphere,
Working and waiting towards the selfsame goal,
When Faith, victorious, everywhere shall spread
Her wings above the nations, ransomed all
From evil, brought to that most glorious end
Wherein all good that sweetens human life—
Science and Art and Poesy—all strains
That voice the music of the human soul,
Shall blend in one majestic, full-voiced chord
Of faith and hope and love, for man and God !

THE END.



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